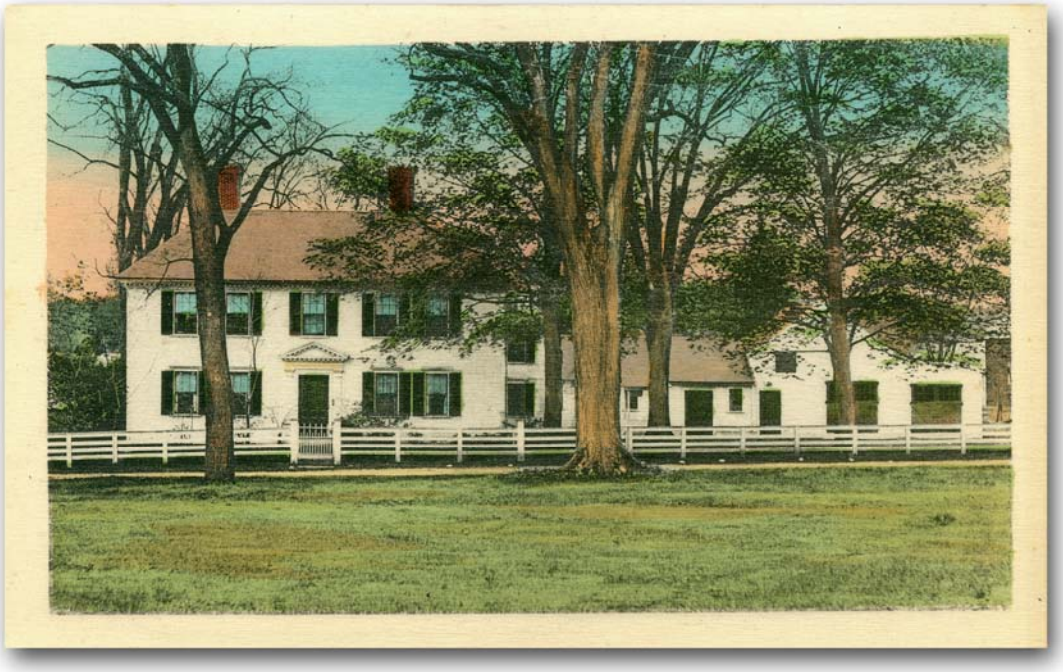
# The Rehabilitation of the Col. Robert Means Mansion

Amherst, New Hampshire

Bill Veillette



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*Front cover image: Postcard of Col. Robert Means mansion. Hand colored, standard size, divided back; Boston: NEN, printed in France, c. 1910.*

*Rear cover image: Eighteenth-century copper button and doll's dress found in walls of Col. Robert Means house, Amherst, N.H.*

# The Rehabilitation of the Col. Robert Means Mansion, Amherst, New Hampshire

By Bill Veillette[1]

The Col. Robert Means "mansion house" (1785) is located in Amherst, New Hampshire, directly off the southeast corner of what was known as "The Plain," where livestock used to graze and the militia once drilled (1.1). Thirty-two-year-old Robert Means, a budding merchant, acquired the initial quarter acre of the property in 1774 "with the Shop & barn thereon built by Me [Paul Dudley Sargent]."[2] The "Shop," which presumably became Robert Means's store, stood "on [the] line of [the] front fence, and [had] but a drive-way between" it and the main block of the house.[3] The store was moved slightly westward by Abby Means in 1846, where it burned in the Great Fire of 1863. Although the 1774 ell is the oldest part of the house, the 1785 main block with its high Georgian style and dominant stature is used to "date" the structure.

Ownership of the Means mansion passed down through blood descendants and marriage until 1955 when it was sold for the first time. Although fifteen families have lived in the house over its 235 years, it is remarkable how much of its historic integrity is intact. It has never been subjected to the touch of an architect, which, ironically, might account for the survival of its classical form. And, where it has seen alterations, almost all of the evidence is still there to be able to determine its original shape and features and how they have changed over time.

The house has dodged a few bullets, however. The first was in 1788 when Michael Keef, a struggling yeoman, unfairly accused Robert Means, by now a wealthy merchant, of "grinding the face of the poor." He threatened Means with "trouble."[4] Keef was later convicted of arson, which may have been the trouble he had in mind. Next, the roof of the house caught fire during town meeting in 1797. Because it was a stone's throw away from the meetinghouse, the mansion "was saved by there being plenty of help nearby."[5] There was also the Great Fire of 1863 when Means's adjacent store and three neighboring buildings on The Plain burned in the middle of the night. Fortunately, Deacon Edward Dudley Boylston (1814–1895) "stayed…an incipient blaze" at the Means mansion with "The Yankee," the town's trusty hand-pump.[6]

Besides the threat of fire, there was the danger of overzealous alteration. In 1885, Deacon Boylston praised Anna Kent Carruth and her mother for making "pleasant improvements" around the Col. Robert Means mansion and "in preserving it in its original form."[7] Nearly 100 years later, in 1983, a persistent businessman pressured the then brand new owners of the house to sell it to him for a quick profit; he was attracted by its expansive back lot and wanted to "improve" the property. Fortunately, the new owners resisted. The man took his project to a more suitable location on the outskirts of the village and built a 10,013 square foot house—twice the size of the Means mansion. Thirteen years later, in 1996, a couple looked at the house, which was again for sale, and the wife rejected it because, "It had bad *karma.*" They went on to purchase another important historic property in the village, hollow it out to its brick walls, and remodel it with "Colonial" features to suit their own tastes.

*1.1 Col. Robert Means mansion, Amherst, N.H., decorated for July 4, 2004 celebrations.*

Finally, there was the commotion in the 1980s when the Selectmen decided the village needed more parking. They proposed paving over the small common directly in


*1.2 For residents of Amherst, the Merrimack River was a barrier to points east, but a virtual highway to Massachusetts. B. Tanner,* The State of New Hampshire, compiled chiefly from actual surveys, 1796 *(New York: John Reid, 1796).*

front of the Means mansion to create a 42-space parking lot. Happily, the proposal met with stiff resistance and was soundly defeated by the citizens at town meeting.

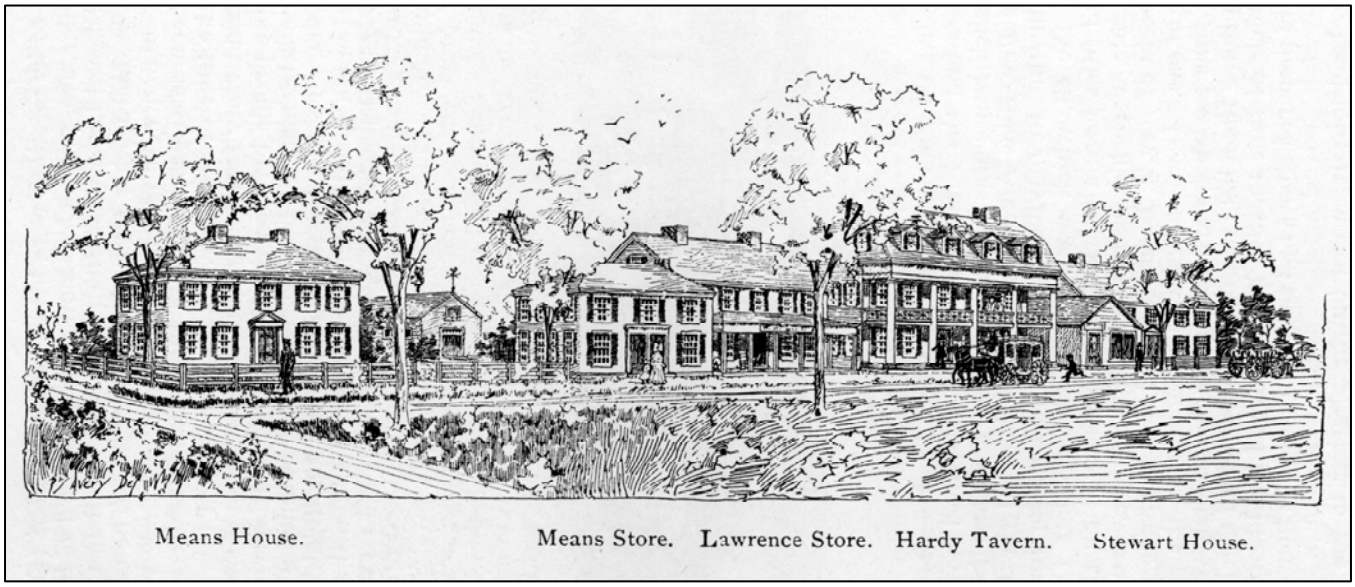
My wife Tracy and I purchased the Col. Robert Means mansion in January 1998.[8] For the next three years, I researched the house and its occupants, and made plans for its rehabilitation. Work started in March 2001 and was substantially completed by August 2003. What follows is a description of the house, its associations, its principal features, and the more interesting aspects of its rehabilitation.

## THE LOCATION

Developers know that to appreciate the value of real estate one must understand its "location, location, location." Likewise, to appreciate the history of a building, one must understand its historic location. Amherst is in southern New Hampshire, just one town away from the Massachusetts border. When it was settled in 1735, "Narragansett No. 3" (i.e., Amherst) was under the Bay Colony, but soon became part of New Hampshire when the current border was established in the latter's favor by King George II in 1740. In 1760, the very year the French and Indian Wars ended, Amherst was incorporated as a town.

Counties were formally established in 1771, and Amherst was named the shire town for Hillsborough County. Being the county seat came with economic benefits, and Amherst quickly became the principal trading center west of the Merrimack River. By 1790, Amherst was the sixth largest town in the state and the most populous west of the Merrimack. At the time, most of New Hampshire's people lived in the Piscataqua region—anchored by Portsmouth—and in the Scots-Irish enclave of Londonderry.[9] Although Amherst came under the jurisdiction of New Hampshire, it was economically linked more to Boston than to Portsmouth. This is because the Merrimack River was a barrier to the Piscataqua, but a virtual highway offering easy access downriver to Massachusetts (1.2).

Robert Means was a merchant who saw an opportunity to increase his business by settling in a shire town.




*1.3 Main street of Amherst as it might have looked before the Great Fire of 1863. Philip S. Avery, Amherst, N.H., 1916.*

He moved to Amherst in 1774 from the neighboring town of Merrimack where he had been established in the mercantile business with his cousin, Jacob McGaw. Proximity to traffic being critical, Means set up shop on The Plain in sight of the brand new meetinghouse, principal taverns, and future new courthouse. The Plain of Amherst was the perfect inland setting for an ambitious young merchant (1.3).

Today, Amherst's village is a quiet neighborhood with only three commercial establishments and no tourists. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is also a local historic district.[10] As architect Lois Lilley Howe (1.7) described it in 1927, "The village has the advantage of its defects. The trolley car has avoided it and it has not a tea room,—a gift shop,—nor a hot dog stand. …Hence it is that it has kept its charm."[11] And so it remains in 2009.

*1.4 a, b. Mary McGregor Means and Col. Robert Means, by Zedekiah Belknap (1781–1858), c. 1815. Oil on canvas. 30 x 25 inches. Private collection.*

## THE ASSOCIATIONS

The Col. Robert Means mansion has some interesting associations, starting, of course, with the man who built it. Robert Means (1742–1823) was of Scots-Irish descent (1.4b). He immigrated to Boston in 1766 from Stewartstown, Ireland, when he was 24 years old and probably started life in America as an indentured weaver to pay for his voyage.[12] By 1797, he was the wealthiest man in Hillsborough County, having made his fortune in both trade and real estate. He was active politically and served in the state legislature when John Langdon was governor. Coincidentally, Langdon was finishing his mansion house in Portsmouth at the same time that Means was building his in Amherst.[13]

Robert Means married Mary McGregor (1752–1838) in the same year that he moved to Amherst (1.4a). Mary was the daughter of the Rev. David McGregor of Londonderry, the leading Presbyterian minister in New Hampshire and a renowned evangelist of the Great Awakening in New England. Perhaps because of her intensely religious upbringing, she is described in the family genealogy as a "terror to evildoers." Mary "ruled her family with an absolute sway" and was noted for throwing her firstborn, Thomas, out of the house for "committing a sin against her moral code."[14] (Thomas impregnated a girl, who in turn fled to Massachusetts and gave birth to their illegitimate son James Robert Means around 1796.) Mary Means holds the record for living in the house longer than anyone to date—63 years.

Abby A. Means (1802–1857), née Abigail Atherton Kent, married Robert Means Jr. and ended up inheriting the house in 1842 upon her husband's death (1.5).

*1.5 Abby A. Means. Ambrotype taken in Lowell, Mass., c. 1852. A slip of paper with the portrait says, "To my dearest Jane [Pierce]. Your affectionate friend. A. A. Means." New Hampshire Historical Society; gift of William P. Veillette.*

She is important for two reasons: First, she made the only major alterations to the house around 1846. Second, she accompanied Jane Pierce to the White House to assist the newly-minted First Lady with her duties as hostess. Jane and Abby were cousins who grew up together in Amherst.

When Jane Pierce (1806–1863), née Jane Appleton, was 17 years old, she moved into the Means mansion with her widowed mother and four siblings. Jane was a granddaughter of Robert and Mary Means. She lived in the house until she was twenty-eight, and it was there that she was courted by Franklin Pierce while he studied law under the local judge Edmund Parker. In a poem on the occasion of Amherst's centennial celebration in 1860, Deacon Boylston described Pierce during his bachelor days in Amherst:

> Thither an embryo President went—
> Young Frank Pierce—on wisdom bent,
> And, reciting his "AMO, AMAS, AMAT,"
> Glanced at the girls with the glint of a cat![15]

Jane was obviously one of the girls who caught the cat's eye, and they married seven years later. Fifteen months after their marriage, Jane gave birth to their first son, Franklin Jr., in the Means mansion. The newborn infant lived only a few days.[16]

Franklin Pierce (1804–1869) married Jane in the parlor of the mansion on November 19, 1834. The affair took all of thirty minutes and they hastily departed for Washington, D.C., where Franklin was then serving in Congress. Eighteen years later, in 1852, he would be elected President of the United States. Unfortunately, the wedding has become the event for which the house is best known, resulting in it being referred to locally as the "Franklin Pierce house." This has led to further confusion, such as the notion that Pierce lived there. It is my life crusade to rebrand the mansion as the "Col. Robert Means house."

Daniel Webster (1782–1852) pled his very first case in Amherst in 1805. It is oral tradition that he would stay at the Means mansion when he had business before the court. Tradition also claims that he once got so drunk that he spent the night passed out on the dining room table (1.6). The table survives in Amherst.[17]

*1.6 Table on which Daniel Webster allegedly spent the night. Winter kitchen-turned-dining room, Col. Robert Means mansion, c. 1896. Photograph by Charles T. Carruth. Collection of James and Sarah Ramsay, Amherst, N.H.*

In 1849, Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) published his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.* In it he describes Col. Robert Means and others in the Merrimack River valley as "great" men and writes that he "knocked at many doors, and even made particular inquiries," but "could not find that there were any [great men] now living."[18] There is no way of knowing if Thoreau knocked on the door of the Means house.

Lois Lilley Howe (1864–1964) started the first all-female architectural firm in Boston—Howe, Manning & Almy—in 1913. She was also the first woman to have been elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1931. As an architect, Howe designed Colonial Revival houses for her clients, and documented historic buildings for her own education. In 1927, she wrote the monograph for *The White Pine Series* on the Col. Robert Means mansion, one of two monographs in the series that were devoted to an individual New Hampshire house.[19] Her professional papers, which include notes and photographs from her

visit to the Means house, are now in the archives of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she earned her degree in architecture.

*1.7 Lois Lilley Howe. Photograph by Florence Maynard. The MIT Museum.*

## THE HOUSE EXTERIOR

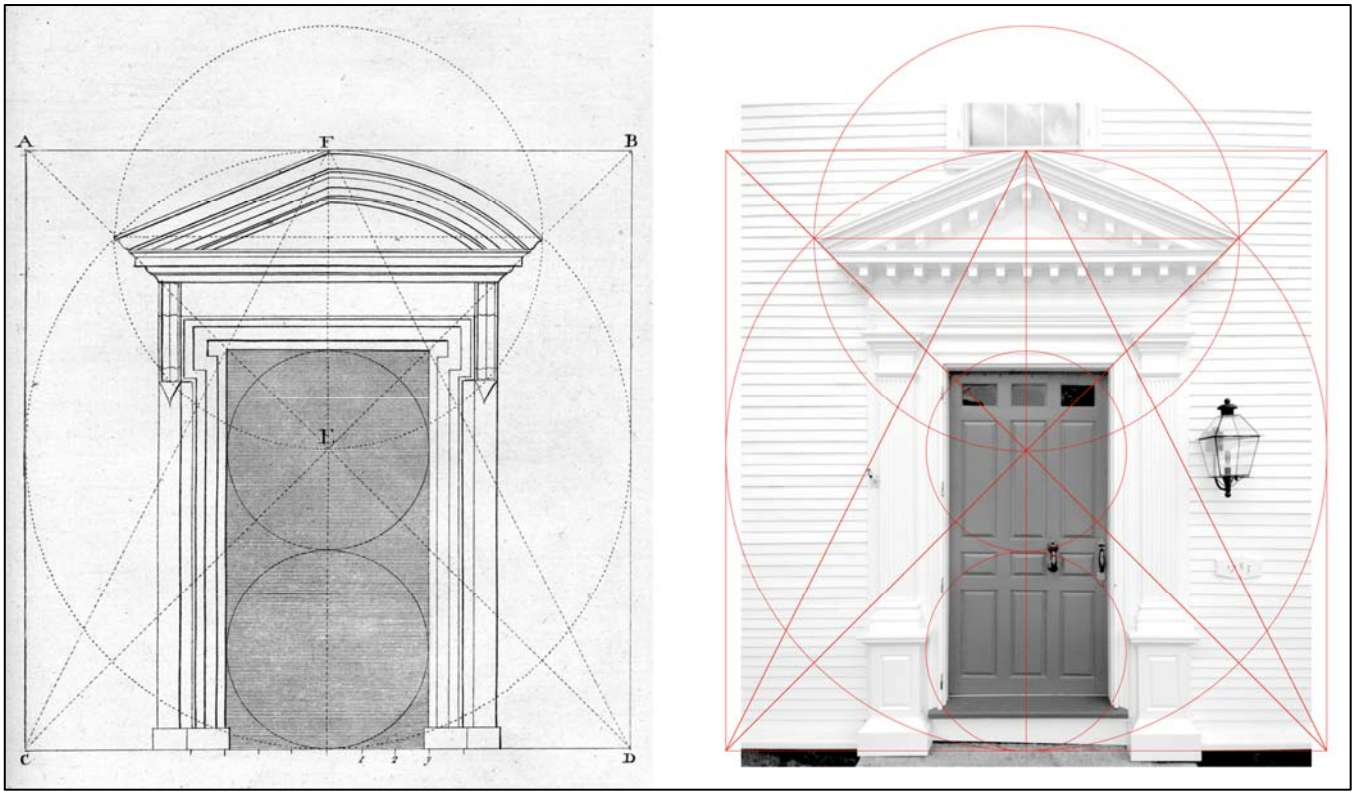
The Col. Robert Means mansion is both a remarkable and an unremarkable structure. It is remarkable for its location relatively far inland (at the time) for such an elegant and highly-crafted dwelling. Yet, it is unremarkable for its "generic" qualities. For sure, it is a high-style Georgian mansion house; but, it slavishly follows the traditional pattern books of the day and lacks the eccentricity or individuality that could tie it to a known craftsman—with perhaps one very small exception as we shall soon see.[20]

The house was built in stages (1.8). The ell was completed in 1774 and may have started its life as a 1½ storey structure. The main block was added in 1785. The small carriage barn was either raised in place or moved to the site sometime after 1835, then connected to the ell by a one-storey back house, which was used principally for storing cordwood to fuel Means's nine fireplaces. With the addition of these last two buildings, the connected structure now conformed neatly to the nineteenth century children's verse, "big house, little house, back house, barn."[21] Finally, the large barn anchoring the west end was raised in 2001.

In the eighteenth century, houses were typically designed by joiners, not by architects. (Architecture did not become a profession in America until the nineteenth century.) Craftsmen—and sometimes their educated clients—referred to pattern books and builders' guides for design ideas and rules on measurements and proportions. One such book that was popular during the Georgian period was *The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository: or, Architecture Display'd,* first published in London by Edward Hoppus in 1737. Hoppus's *Repository* devotes considerable ink to explaining "problems in geometry" and in providing "rules for arches, doors, windows, ceiling-pieces, chimney-pieces, and their particular embellishments." For example, Plate 33 shows how to lay out the proportions of a frontispiece. Proportion is a hallmark of Georgian design, and it is especially important to get it right on the most prominent entrance of the house. The proportions of the front doorway of the Means mansion precisely match those recommended by Hoppus (1.9). Because Hoppus's *Repository* is the only builder's guide with this specific plate in it, it is highly likely that the book was used in designing the frontispiece of the Means mansion.[22]

This example of a pattern book dictating proportion also helps to bust a myth. Because the front door of the Means house is a generous 44½" wide, people often refer to it as a "coffin door." As we can see by this

*1.8 Col. Robert Means mansion, Amherst, N.H., April 22, 2004, showing its main block, ell, back house, small barn, and big barn. The house was rehabilitated by William and Tracy Veillette between March 2001 and August 2003.*



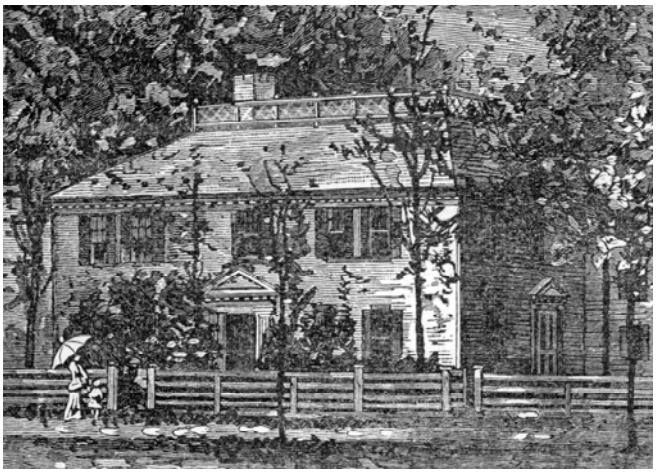

*1.9 a, b. Left: Plate 33 of Edward Hoppus's* The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository *(1760 edition) showing how to lay out a frontispiece. Right: Frontispiece of Col. Robert Means mansion showing regulating lines matching Plate 33 of Hoppus's* Repository. *Photograph and drawing by John Butler, Hollis, N.H., July 30, 2003.*

example, however, the proportions of the front door had more to do with aesthetics than with the infrequent need to move a coffin in and out of the house.

Symmetry is another hallmark of Georgian design. There is a door on each of the four façades of the main block of the house. The "door" on the east façade, however, does not function—and never has. Notice that there are no steps or hardware (1.10). What appears to be a door is actually one-inch thick raised paneling that is nailed directly to the sheathing. This is one of several examples in the Means mansion of the joiner going "by the book"—even at extra cost—in designing and building the house.

*1.10 False door at east façade, of Col. Means mansion, August 18, 2008.*

In terms of "embellishments," balustrades were a common feature on hipped-roof houses of both the Georgian and Federal periods. The earliest image of the Means mansion is a wood engraving (1.11) that was likely cut between 1846 and 1858.[23] It shows a balustrade wrapped around the chimneys to hide the ridge and hips of the roof. This evidence prompted us to restore the balustrade, which was likely removed in the last half of the nineteenth century.

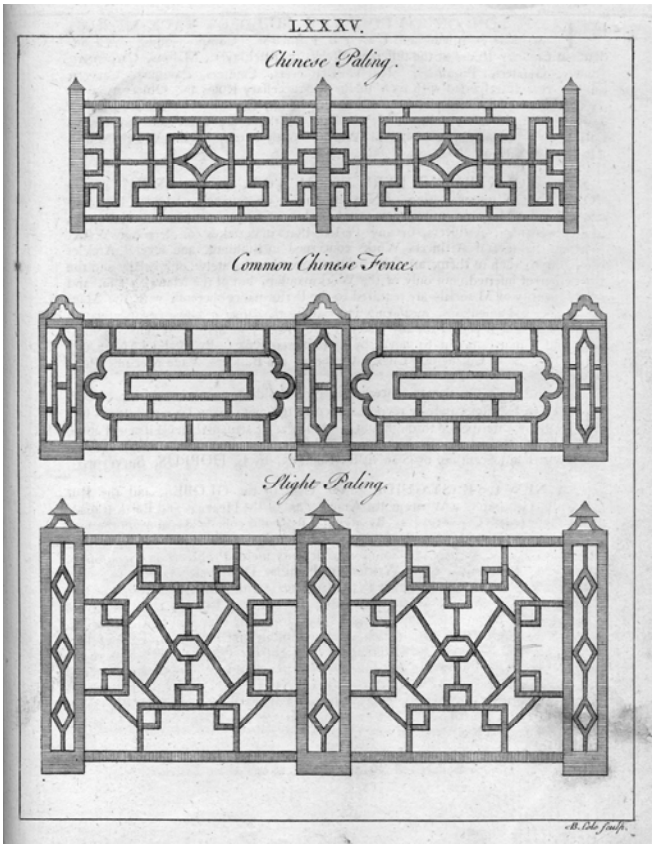


*1.11 Detail of woodcut of Col. Robert Means mansion showing a balustrade on the roof in either the diamond or Chinese style.*

According to *The Rules of Work, of the Carpenters, in the Town of Boston* (1800),[24] there are four styles of "turrets" (i.e., balustrades):

> Plain posts and rails with plancere per foot– .17¢
> Diamond work turrets at per foot, run– .40¢
> Chinese work, at– .50¢
> Ballustrade straight work per foot– .75¢

My research revealed that the "plain posts and rails"




*1.12 Plate 85 of Hoppus's* Repository *(1760 edition) showing Chinese designs that are much more elaborate than those used for roof-top balustrades in New England.*

style appeared almost uniquely on gambrel roofs; the "diamond," "Chinese," and "straight" (i.e., baluster) styles appeared on both hipped and gambrel roofs; and balustrades of any type appeared very infrequently on gabled roofs.

Based solely on the woodcut, the balustrade of the Means mansion was either in the diamond or the Chinese taste. The price difference was not great between the two, and one could argue it either way depending on how much license one thinks the artist and engraver exercised. Plates 85 through 90 of the 1760 edition of Hoppus's *Repository* show some very elaborate Chinese patterns (1.12).[25] These patterns are much more elaborate than those of any of the roof-top balustrades that survive or are documented in New England that I could find. More typical is the relatively simple pattern found on the balustrade of the Gov. John Langdon mansion in Portsmouth, which was built at nearly the same time as the Means mansion.

The choice of which pattern to use would not be entirely mine, however; the Amherst Village Historic District Commission would have the final say. I knew I was in for trouble when the one commissioner with a degree in architecture objected to even restoring the balustrade and blurted out, "Widows' walks are found only on the coast!" (The notion of a widow's walk is a myth, of course; balustrades are an architectural feature appropriate to any high-style Georgian house regardless of location.[26]) I immediately asked to table the application, and the next month I returned with a lesson plan. My turn was up at 10:00 p.m. and, when the commissioners saw my eighty-eight page presentation, they immediately softened and wanted to move straight to a vote on approving the application. I insisted, however, on presenting my findings and methodically took the next hour to do so. Having found plenty of examples of both diamond and Chinese work on extant buildings and in historic photographs of lost buildings, I suggested the choice of either a simple Chinese pattern from the Gen. Philip Schuyler mansion[27] in Albany, N.Y., which closely matched the artist's and engraver's interpretation of the balustrade, or a diamond pattern. The commission judged both options from a contemporary rather than an historic point-of-view and felt that the diamond pattern evoked lattice-work, which today is considered a cheap form of fencing. So, the Chinese pattern won out.[28]

The next question was, "How big should it be?" The answer was again found in a builder's guide book. *The Builder's Dictionary: or, Gentleman and Architect's Companion* (London, 1734)[29] calls for a balustrade to be no more than "Breast-high" and gives measurements based on the "Royal *Paris* Foot," which translates to an English foot height of 3'-6" maximum and 2'-5" minimum:

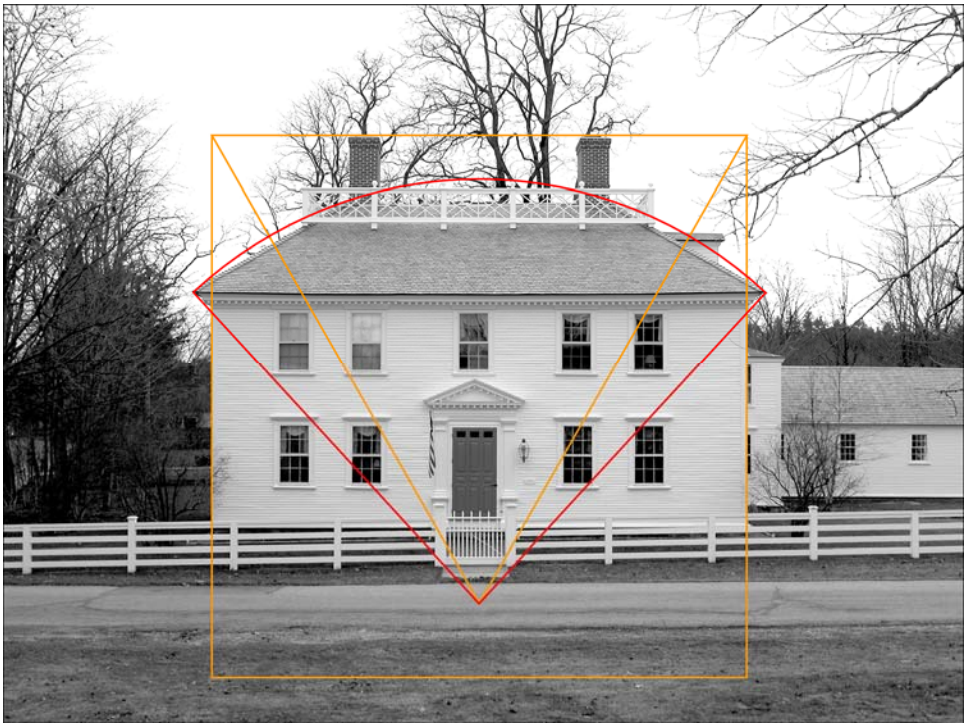
> BALUSTERS, BALISTERS,…
> All Balustrades, being intended to be Breast-high, none should ever exceed three Foot and a quarter at most, not be lower than two Foot and quarter at least. The Measures for this, to be taken from the Royal *Paris* Foot, which is to the *English* Foot, as 1068 to 1000.

The measurements of the "stuff" (i.e., stock) for the "paling" (i.e., fretwork) came from *Articles of the Carpenters Company of Philadelphia: and Their Rules for Measuring and Valuing House-Carpenters Work* (1786):[30]

> CHINESE railing, as per plate, figure 1, of stuff near 5-8ths by 1¼ inches, per superficial foot, – 0-1-6
> Ditto, framed of stuff 1¼ by 2 inches, per foot – 0-2-0
> Ditto, as per plate, figure 2, near 5-8$^{th}$ by 1¼ inches per foot, – 0-2-0
> Ditto, near 1¼ by 2 inches, per foot, – 0-2-6

The final problem was the proper placement of the balustrade on the roof. The answer lay in geometry. I used a variant of the technique that Marcus Whiffen demonstrates in his book, *The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg*,[31] as follows: The façade of

the house is placed tightly in a square with the chimneys touching the square's top side. An inverted equilateral triangle is drawn in the square, with the top of the square forming the base of the triangle. The apex of the inverted triangle establishes the center point of an imaginary circle. From this center point, an arc is drawn starting at one of the eaves. The results show the perfect geometry of the roof of the mansion, with the arc touching precisely where the hips meet the ridge. The arc also gives the upper limit for locating the top of the balustrade (1.13). This technique, of course, assumes an orthographic projection of the elevation, which is not the view that any building really enjoys. The Means mansion, however, is located in a rural village, which allows one to view the building from quite a distance and even slightly uphill, offering something approximating an orthographic projection.[32]



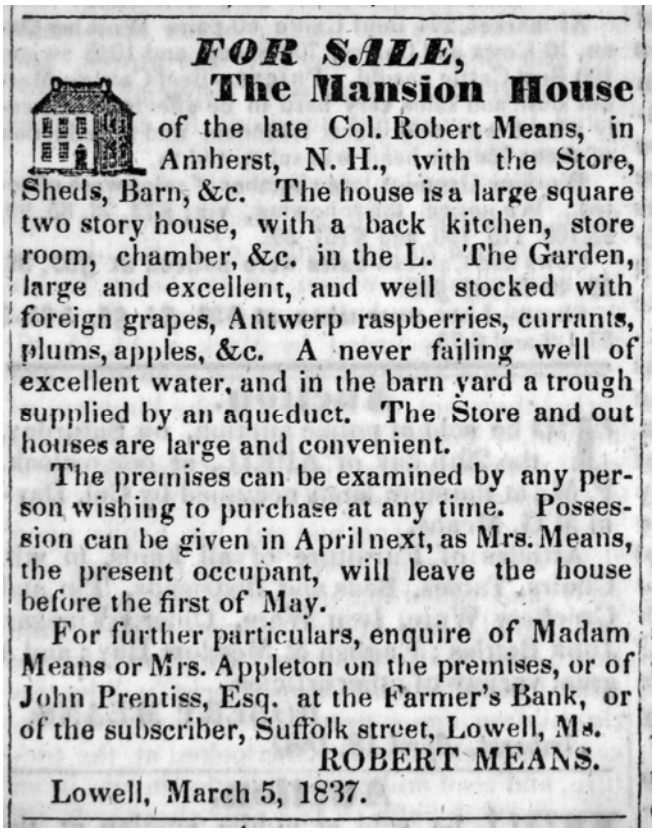
*1.13 Regulating lines on north façade of Col. Robert Means mansion, showing the perfect geometry of its hipped roof and the upper limit for the placement of its balustrade. Photograph and drawing by William P. Veillette, November 26, 2003.*

The balustrade was built by Tony Hall of New Boston, N.H., out of cedar and mahogany. To avoid weather and physical risk, he built it on the ground under shelter and hoisted it in place on August 21, 2003. This act literally "topped-off" and marked the end of the rehabilitation project. The final result looks very convincing.

## THE YARDS

The backyard of the Means mansion was originally reserved for gardens. In 1837, Robert Means Jr. placed an advertisement in *The Farmers' Cabinet* to offer for sale "The Mansion House of the late Col. Robert Means" (1.14).[33] The ad described the garden as "large and excellent, and well stocked with foreign grapes, Antwerp raspberries, currants, plums, apples, &c." The lot is now less than half the size it was in 1837, leaving insufficient room for recreating the historic garden with all its fruit trees and bushes.

The front yard was dominated by Means's store, which must have attracted lots of traffic. When excavating around the main block to improve drainage, underneath the backhouse to dig out a crawl space, and around the small barn to install a foundation, we discovered a single layer of cobblestones buried just below grade in several of the formerly high-traffic areas. These areas were at the west of the main block between it and where the store originally stood, at the



**FOR SALE,**
**The Mansion House**

of the late Col. Robert Means, in Amherst, N. H., with the Store, Sheds, Barn, &c. The house is a large square two story house, with a back kitchen, store room, chamber, &c. in the L. The Garden, large and excellent, and well stocked with foreign grapes, Antwerp raspberries, currants, plums, apples, &c. A never failing well of excellent water, and in the barn yard a trough supplied by an aqueduct. The Store and out houses are large and convenient.

The premises can be examined by any person wishing to purchase at any time. Possession can be given in April next, as Mrs. Means, the present occupant, will leave the house before the first of May.

For further particulars, enquire of Madam Means or Mrs. Appleton on the premises, or of John Prentiss, Esq. at the Farmer's Bank, or of the subscriber, Suffolk street, Lowell, Ms.

ROBERT MEANS.

Lowell, March 5, 1837.

*1.14 Col. Robert Means's heirs made an unsuccessful attempt to sell his "Mansion House" for the first time in 1837. It would not be offered for sale again until 1955, when the effort did succeed.*

west of the small barn, and at the west of the ell. A cross section of the earth shows that the cobblestones were strewn directly on top of the loam (1.15). This find prompted me to search for an alternative way to pave the driveway once it was reconfigured.


*1.15 Layers of cobblestones were found buried just beneath the surface on the west sides of the main block, ell, and small barn of the Col. Robert Means mansion, April 7, 2001.*

My initial thought was to use cobblestones as a paver in the manner of Acorn Street on Beacon Hill in Boston. Since there is no longer a market for cobblestones, the only option would have been to negotiate with a gravel pit owner to allow us to pick through his "tailings" pile by hand for suitable stones.[34] The problem is that we would need 24,000 cobblestones to pave the driveway and the time required to gather the materials in this manner would have doubled the labor on the project. In addition, I was concerned about frost heave; the ground freeze in coastal Boston is less severe than in Amherst, and I could imagine the stones popping out of the ground.

Fortunately, the "Big Dig" was underway and we were able to acquire 12,000 nicely worn Belgian blocks that had formerly paved Summer Street in Boston. The hand-cut granite blocks reportedly came from quarries at Cape Anne. It took a mason and me twelve weeks to install them. The final result is *not* historically accurate for a rural village, but has the virtue of using natural materials and being environmentally-friendly in terms of mitigating storm water runoff.

THE HOUSE INTERIOR

The main block of the Col. Robert Means mansion is a hipped-roof, double-house with a center hall plan. The center hall is typical of the style, with a wide and gently-rising staircase, raised-panel wainscot, and classical cornice moldings. The railing of the staircase marks the centerline of the house, with two rooms on either side of the hall on both floors. The two massive chimneys are at the interior of the floor plan, between the front and back rooms.

Concerning staircases, Hoppus's *Repository* warns the reader:

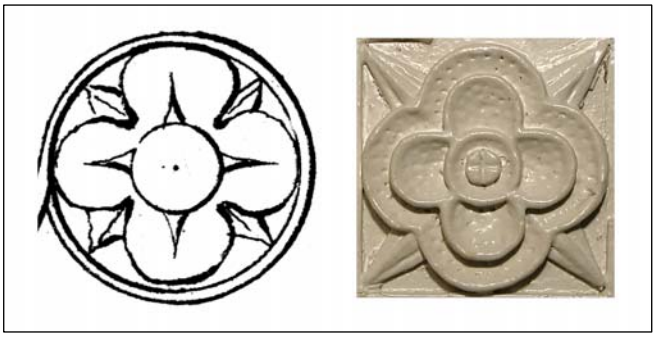
> …Stair-cases should be spacious, light, and easy to ascend, that they may thereby invite, as it were, the people to go up them. ...In making of Stair-cases, the Ancients always observed this Rule, That the Number of Steps to every Stair-case should be odd, and not even, to the Intent, that when you begin to ascend with your Right-foot first (as most Persons generally do) you will end with the same foot also."[35]

The central staircase of the mansion is a "spacious" four feet wide, the rise of its steps a "light" six inches, and the treads an "easy" twelve inches (1.16). The carpenter also observed the "Ancient Rule;" there are an odd fifteen steps on the principal run to the landing, and an odd five on the return to the second floor.

*1.16 Robbie relaxing in the center hall of the Col. Robert Means mansion, August 23, 2008.*

*1.17 Profiles of moldings and construction detail of handrail on central staircase of Col. Robert Means mansion, July 19, 2008.*

Because the paint has been stripped from the handrail of the staircase, we can clearly see how it was constructed. It is composed of three different moldings that are glued and nailed to a rectangular railing. To conform to where the railing curves, the carpenter made a series of careful wedge-shaped cuts in the cap molding, which would normally be concealed under paint (1.17). As one would expect, the curved sections of the handrail sweep upward in unison with the opposing chair rail of the wainscot, and the profile of the chair rail molding matches that of the upper portion of the handrail. The construction of the stair balustrade and the turnings on the balusters are also typical of the period.



*1.18 Detail of rosette from Plate 57 of Hoppus's* Repository *(left) and from staircase panel at Col. Robert Means mansion (right).*

The hand-carved rosettes on the stair panel might provide the one example of a design interpretation that could reflect the individuality of the carver who worked on the house. The design for these rosettes appears to have been adapted from one that is in Plate 57 of Hoppus's *Repository*. The actual rosette differs principally in that it employs concentric quatrefoils, which evokes a somewhat Gothic look (1.18). Thus far, I have been unable to find another example of this double quatrefoil rosette in any surviving or documented historic house in New England. Although a very long shot, it would make for a great story if this unique rosette were to become the Holy Grail that leads me to confirm the identity of the carver.[36]

Lighting the staircase and hall is a compass window, which was a traditional treatment for the rear wall of the center hall at the stair landing. Compass windows are often mistaken for Palladian windows. They are certainly Palladian-inspired, but strictly speaking a Palladian (or Venetian or Serlian) window also has a set of vertical lights flanking each side of the compass window.

The second floor of the center hall has a feature that is uncommon, but not unique. The wall between the hall and the sitting room chamber is hinged at the top so that it can be lifted and hooked up to the ceiling of the center hall (1.19). Robert Means might have had the idea for this feature from the Nathan Kendall house in Amherst, which has a smaller example of such a wall in its upper hall.[37] When the wall is up, it creates a large room for dancing and card parties, which Robert Means reportedly enjoyed. The Rev. William Bentley of Salem, Mass., visited the Meanses in 1797 and wrote in his diary, "Dancing forms a lovely amusement & conversation has its richest pleasures in their company. The House was disposed with taste & hospitality was the element of their virtue."[38]

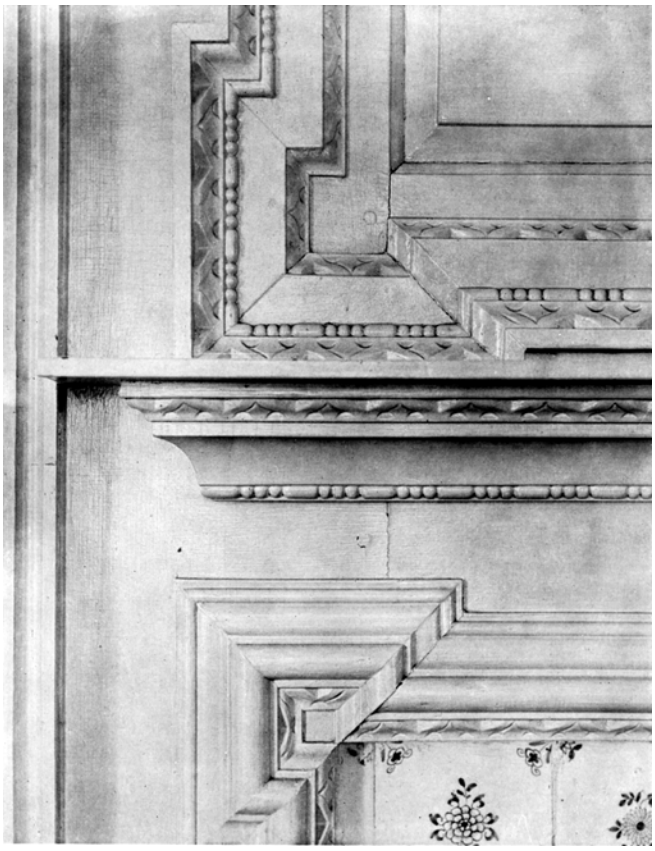
Heading back down the stairs, it is easy to imagine oneself in the shoes of the young bride Jane Appleton as she descended the steps to meet her groom Franklin Pierce in the parlor to the right. A witness to their wedding wrote that Jane "behaved sweetly and kept up her courage to the last,"[39] as if she were being led to her execution! Photographs of the parlor taken around 1896 and 1927 show desiccated flowers in a glass vase on the mantel shelf (1.20). These flowers, which were set out for the Pierces' wedding, survived for 121 years in that room. In 1955, when the house was sold out of the family,

*1.19 Paneled wall in center hall of the Col. Robert Means mansion, August 23, 2008. The wall is hinged so that it may be lifted up and hooked to the ceiling to create a ballroom for dancing.*

*1.20 Parlor of Col. Robert Means mansion, c. 1896. Franklin and Jane Pierce were married in this room on November 19, 1834. The flowers on the mantel were set out for their wedding and preserved there until 1955 when they were innocently tossed out. Photograph by Charles T. Carruth. Historical Society of Amherst, N.H.*

the new owners—not knowing the history of the flowers—innocently disposed of them.

Aside from the Pierces' wedding, the parlor is known for its paneling. The carving on the chimneypiece (1.21) is attributed to the shop of Maj. John Dunlap (1746–1792), who lived eight miles away in Bedford, N.H. The attribution was made by Charles S. Parsons and appeared in print in the catalog for the 1970 exhibition of Dunlap furniture at the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, N.H. In making the attribution, Parsons described the carving as "the familiar flowered ogee molding" of the Dunlap family.[40] Unfortunately, Parsons' papers, which are now at the New Hampshire Historical Society, do not reveal any additional clues as to why he made this attribution. So, we are left to start from scratch.



*1.21 Detail of carving on chimneypiece in parlor of Col. Robert Means mansion, c. 1927. Photograph by Kenneth Clark.*

To begin, the most obvious thing to do is to compare for ourselves Dunlap's "floward og" [flowered ogee] on his known furniture and paneling with the embellished cyma reversa molding in the Means parlor (1.22). Both carvings have undercuts along the fillet, but this is where the similarity ends. The undercuts on the Means moldings are a simple V-notch; those on the Dunlaps' work are a ⅄-shape.[41] The Dunlaps almost always outline and accentuate their undercuts with an incised line. There is also little or no space between each undercut, which creates the effect of undulating negative and positive waves. On the Means house moldings, the undercuts are farther apart, which makes for a larger field between them within which the decorative incisions are made. These embellishments look like upside-down tulips.

*1.22 Top: One of Hoppus's proposed "embellishments" for ogee and astragal moldings* (Repository, *Plate 58). Middle: Carved pattern on ogee and astragal moldings of parlor chimneypiece at Col. Robert Means mansion. Bottom: "Flowered ogee" with beaded astragal from a slant-top desk, 1780–1792, attributed to Maj. John Dunlap. Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, N.H.; gift of Lois Warren Shaw, 1962.15.*

I could find no examples of the Dunlaps' work that had carving resembling the decoration on the Means chimneypiece. I did, however, find almost exactly the same carving in five historic houses in Massachusetts, four of which were built in the middle of the eighteenth century, and one that was built just three years before the Means house. They are: Shirley-Eustis house, Roxbury (1747); King Hooper house (aka "The

Lindens" ), Danvers [42] (1754); Dalton Club, Newburyport (c. 1760); Lee Mansion, Marblehead (1768); and Peirce-Nichols house, Salem (1782). There is no evidence in Parsons' papers that he inspected the carvings in these Massachusetts houses.[43]

Although visual comparisons and the Massachusetts examples suggest the attribution is wrong, there actually is still an evenhanded chance that John Dunlap or his workshop might have done the carving—if not more. Here is the case:

First, we found a scrap of the ogee molding in the parlor walls on which there were pencil outlines of the Dunlaps' flowered pattern (1.23), which is interesting by itself, but also shows that the chimneypiece was built and carved on site rather than imported.[44]

*1.23 Scrap of ogee molding, with pencil marks, found in wall of parlor during sill repairs by Tony Hall on September 23, 2002.*

Second, the Dunlaps were locals, and the closest carvers to Amherst by a long shot.[45]

Third, John Dunlap's surviving account books show that the majority of his trade was with fellow Scots-Irishmen.[46]

Fourth, the Dunlap workshops turned out a few traditional pieces of furniture for customers who apparently did not want his eccentric designs. So, we know the Dunlaps were willing to eschew their own tastes to satisfy those of a client by copying others' work.[47]

Fifth, shortly after his house was finished, Robert Means, who was serving on the New Hampshire president's Privy Council, had John Dunlap's name placed into nomination for promotion to Major in the Ninth Regiment of the New Hampshire militia.[48] Given the other two nominations that Means engineered at the same time, this was clearly a reward to Dunlap for some personal reason.[49] (Dunlap's nomination was accepted and he was appointed. So, it is thanks to Robert Means that we know him as *Major* John Dunlap.)

This final piece of evidence is intriguing. As noted above, joiners—not "architects" as we know them today—designed houses during this period. Could Robert Means have commissioned the most capable joiner in the area to design and build him a house in the manner of Jeremiah Lee's and others' mansions down the Merrimack River valley? Could he have acquired a copy of Hoppus's *Repository* for Dunlap to use in the undertaking?[50] It certainly would make more sense for Means to reward Dunlap for designing and building him an entire house than it would for simply carving him a chimneypiece. If this notion seems far-fetched, the question remains open as to why Means would reward Dunlap, a man with whom he—to the best of our knowledge—had no other major interactions.[51]

Across the hall from the parlor is the sitting room, which was used as a dining room by Abby Means after 1842. In 1846, Abby made several major changes to the house when she replaced all of the 12-over-12 windows with the more stylish 6-over-6 windows (and, probably, exterior shutters); hung wallpaper; installed a food pass-through; and removed the Georgian architrave from the dining room fireplace, which she replaced with a Greek Revival mantelpiece. This is the only fireplace in the house that was altered. In addition to the new mantel, the firebox was lined with thick slabs of red sandstone.

To learn why just this one out of the nine fireplaces was altered, we carefully removed the mantelpiece and sandstone, which revealed the paint outline of the original architrave that surrounded a much larger firebox of brick in very good condition (1.24). Having made this discovery, we decided to restore the missing Georgian-style frame and preserve the larger firebox. The restored fireplace works perfectly—it does not smoke—so, we can only assume that Abby Means wanted a sandstone liner to retain and radiate heat more efficiently, covered by a contemporary mantelpiece on which to place mementos.[52]

*1.24 Dining room fireplace, with Greek Revival mantelpiece and sandstone liner removed, clearly showing paint outline of former Georgian architrave and large brick firebox.*

Another feature in the dining room that Abby Means installed is a food pass-through to connect the kitchen to the dining room (1.25). Lois Lilley Howe

described this as a "dastardly deed" because it required the bake oven in the winter kitchen to be removed in favor of a new closet for a "slide through" to the adjoining closet in the dining room.[53] Such practical features were promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing in his 1842 book *Cottage Residences,* and it is interesting to see it appear in the Means house just four years later. Next to the food pass-through is a knob connected by a wire to a bell (1.26) in the former kitchen. In Downing's words, the use of the bell was "to bring the servant to our room to learn our wishes."[54] Like Howe, I was at first repulsed by this alteration. But, when I learned more about Abby Means's role as Jane Pierce's surrogate hostess in the White House, I decided to preserve this authentic evidence of her social focus and position rather than reconstruct what would be a contrived bake oven.

*1.25 The food pass-through was a practical feature promoted by Andrew Downing in 1842. Abby Means installed hers in 1846.*

*1.26 Service bell in former winter kitchen of Col. Means mansion, July 6, 2008.*

Away from the formal spaces, there are two sets of stairs for common use. One set is at the west entrance, which is the side of the house that faced Means's store. Its steps have very shallow treads, and wind 180 degrees to the second floor and a full 450 degrees to the attic.[55] They are well-worn as if everyone in the house used them, not just the servants. The other set of stairs is in the "back" kitchen in the ell and is used to access the two servants' chambers above (1.27). It is nothing more than a straight, narrow, steep set of stairs boxed-in with one-inch-thick boards and a door at the base.[56] Stairs like these are often the casualty of a renovation because of either a concern for safety or the desire to open them up to the room. Once they are removed or altered, they cannot be restored because building codes will not permit their narrow width and steep rise. It is important to preserve rare features such as these that cannot be replicated, rather than replace or alter them with something that is simply ordinary.

The most difficult rehabilitation work was in the kitchen in the ell, which was modernized in the 1950s and updated in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The ell was the location of the original summer kitchen, which once had a substantial cooking fireplace and bake oven that were likely removed between 1934 and 1954 by Agnes Tucker Carruth in favor of a cast iron stove. Fortunately, the 10-foot-long granite hearth had been lowered into the crawl space below the floor rather than broken

*1.27 Staircase in summer kitchen in ell of Col. Robert Means mansion, August 24, 2008. Such narrow, steep, boxed-in stairs are becoming rare and should be preserved.*


*1.28 Ed Gilligan and Graham Pendlebury install the hearth for the missing fireplace in the summer kitchen, June 14, 2001. The hearth was retrieved from the crawl space below.*

up, and it was in perfect condition. Likewise, the original 7½" brick had been used for paving the front sidewalk and was in good enough shape to reclaim for facing the visible portion of a reconstructed fireplace. Once the modern sheetrock was removed, the timber framing revealed clearly where the fireplace and bake oven had been located relative to one another. The new opening of the firebox is slightly smaller than its original because we wanted to comply with fire codes, and the breastwork is of course contrived. The work was done by mason Graham Pendlebury and his tender Ed Gilligan, both of New Boston, N.H., (1.28). The final result is convincing to all but seasoned architectural historians, as intended (1.29).

*1.29 Reconstructed fireplace in summer kitchen in ell of Col. Robert Means mansion, November 19, 2006. The spit turning the chicken is powered by a mechanical "spit-jack."*

The fireplace hardware presented another test. We tried to locate a cast iron bake oven door from one of Amherst's nineteenth-century foundries, but to no avail.[57] Rather than use random antique hardware, blacksmith David Court of Northfield, N.H., made the door units for the bake oven and ash pit, an adjustable crane, and a lintel with built-in glove warmers.[58] Because we intended to use the bake oven, it was important to have the door "unit" include both the vent and built-in damper, which are the principal technical advantages of the cast iron door design. Such units may be seen in old homes throughout Amherst (1.30). They were sold as upgrades to traditional bake ovens that employed wooden plugs to block their openings.


*1.30 Cast iron bake oven door unit made in Amherst, N.H. The pull-tab at the top operates a built-in damper, and the vent is weighted to stay in the open position.*

The new bake oven with its reproduction door unit cooks as well as an authentic one. There is much confusion about how bake ovens work, which makes it worth explaining briefly: The damper is opened and a fire is built directly in the oven (not in the ash pit) out of hardwood that has been cut and split into small pieces. The fire is kept burning for several hours to heat the brick of the dome (1.31). When the black carbon of the initial fire burns completely off of the brick dome (i.e., turns to white ash), the oven is hot enough for cooking. The fire and coals are shoveled out of the bake oven into the adjacent fireplace, and the deck of the oven is swabbed down with a round straw broom that is repeatedly dipped in a bucket of water. The damper is shut and—after the oven comes down to the proper temperature—the food is inserted and the door closed.[59] The food cooks by the radiant heat of the brick dome. The ash pit is not used for cooking; its function was to store excess ashes from the firebox for use later in making soap.

*1.31 Heating the bake oven.*

Another challenge of the kitchen rehabilitation was determining where to put the modern appliances. With the reconstruction of the massive fireplace, there would be no room left in the ell for anything besides a kitchen table. Although the Historic District Commission only had purview over exterior work, it was sympathetic to our goal of restoring the historic fireplace at the interior and allowed us to build a small, one-storey addition for the modern necessities. We also restored

*1.32 The winter kitchen, pictured here, retains its original beaded pine board sheathing. Similar sheathing in the summer kitchen was a victim of successive modernizations and has now been restored. Interior shutters such as those shown here were used for privacy, shade, and warmth—not for protection against Indian attacks.*

the original pantry that had been removed to create a breakfast nook, which returned the first floor plan of the ell to its original configuration. To finish it off, the interior was sheathed with reclaimed, beaded white pine boards installed horizontally, which replicates the original wall treatment that had been removed long ago in favor of sheetrock (1.32). Rather than restore the historic plaster ceilings to cover the beams that had been innocently exposed by former owners, we boxed in the beams to conserve precious ceiling height.[60] Other than in barns and sheds, beams in Georgian style buildings were traditionally hidden behind lath and plaster, or boxed in.

The privy was the one pure preservation component of the project. It was perfectly intact and simply needed some conservation work. For a privy, it was quite luxurious at the time: It is indoors (in the small barn), finished with plaster, and has multiple holes. There are three holes for adults, one for small children, and a square hole for emptying chamber pots. It is unlikely that people used the privy together. I surmise that the multiple holes allowed for assigned seating between at least the men and the women for the sake of inter-gender harmony.[61]

The cellar, which completes the historic tour, was originally used for both household storage and as a warehouse for Robert Means's excess store inventory. Access to the cellar from the store was through a bulkhead, which was on the west side of the house where the store used to stand. With the store long gone and

*1.33 The privy, August 23, 2008. Other than conservation work, the privy has not changed since its original installation.*

the principal entrance for visitors now on that west façade facing the driveway, I moved the bulkhead to the rear (south) of the house to be out of view. The cellar can also be accessed from the interior and, since its restoration, has become the most popular part of the tour. A very unusual feature is its cobblestone floor

*1.34 Robert Means stored items in the cellar for both the household and his store. The cobblestone floor was restored by Peter Veillette in the summer of 2007.*

(1.34), which was laid much more carefully than the cobblestone paving we found buried under the loam outside. About twenty percent of the floor had been torn up to fill in a basement well-hole (and for other reasons), so we reclaimed some of the buried cobblestones from outside to repair it. My 17-year-old son Peter and I disassembled a sound portion of the floor to learn how it was laid and, having determined how to proceed, he made the repairs. To finish it off, Peter vacuumed out the 222-year-old dirt from between the stones and brushed in clean sand. Several years before, I had relocated the boiler and oil tanks out of the main cellar, which now is mostly unobstructed and—thanks to Peter's work—looks as it did in Robert Means's day.

## THE BIG BARN

While the purpose of the project was to rehabilitate the historic house, we also took the opportunity to correct a serious flaw and add to the house's architectural history. A one-bay shed garage had been attached to the small barn, perhaps as early as the 1885 "pleasant improvements" made by Anna Kent Carruth and her mother. The shed had two issues: It was very poorly constructed and—having been built in the same plane as the north façade of the small barn—it obscured the pleasing form of the latter. The visual damage already done, a car collector who purchased the house in the late 1970s added another garage bay to the shed, and extended the entire structure to the rear to accommodate five vehicles in all (including the small barn). The 1970s construction was of good quality, but the now three garage-door openings (two in the shed and one in the small barn) expanded the width of the driveway to create a large sea of asphalt (1.35). The driveway was great for playing street hockey, but it (and the shed) made an unpleasant first-impression for visitors and detracted from the beauty of the historic house.

*1.35 The former shed hid the pleasing form of the small barn, and created a sea of asphalt that was good for sports, but bad for the eye. Photographed May 11, 1998.*

The obvious solution was to remove the entire shed to re-expose the full form of the small barn. But then where to garage the cars? Another structure would have to be built to replace the shed. We decided to erect a second barn immediately behind and butting up against the small barn. And to reduce the driveway's width, we moved the garage entrance of the small barn from its gable-front on the north to its eave-side on the west. To add to the architectural history of the house, the new barn would be framed with timbers in the manner of the revival of the ancient craft that has been underway since the nation's bicentennial (1.36, 1.37). The Timber Frame Revival was started by people like Tedd Benson of Walpole, N.H., and Jack Sobon of Windsor, Mass., and its epicenter is arguably southwestern New Hampshire and western Massachusetts.

The Timber Frame Revival brings back the seventeenth-century aesthetic of exposed posts and beams that are decorated with chamfers. The principal differences between today's frames and those of the seventeenth century are: The timbers are machine-planed rather than hand-hewn; they are joined by the "square-rule" rather than the "scribe-rule" method; and they

*1.36 Barn-raising, September 10, 2001, as seen from the back yard. Will Truax of Center Barnstead, N.H., is coaxing purlins into place. The frame was raised in one day.*

*1.37 Bill Veillette nailing a bough of white pine to the peak of the barn frame, September 10, 2001. It is tradition to consecrate a frame with a bough from the species of tree from which it was cut. The frame of the big barn at the Col. Robert Means mansion is mostly eastern white pine for the posts and beams, and white oak for the braces. Photograph by Tracy Veillette.*

are typically pinned with wooden dowels in straight holes drilled after the frame has been raised rather than with "treenails" in offset holes drilled ahead of the raising. We followed the revival's style, with the exception of using dowels, which apparently have a tendency to spin in, or fall out of, their holes as the frame dries.

*1.38 Initials of Kyle Whitehead and Jeremy Woodliff, with date of raising, are carved into king post.*

The frame was designed by Kyle Whitehead of Bradford, New Hampshire. Kyle also worked on the frame, but most of the joinery was handcut by his apprentice, Jeremy Woodliff. Because the garage doors would be on the eave side, Kyle based the frame on an "English barn," an early New England barn type. The raising was on September 10, 2001, the day before the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. Having raised a frame in one day that will last many centuries, we went to bed that evening on a high note. The next day, when the opposite happened to the World Trade Center, the wind went out of our sails. The date of the frame's raising, as well as Kyle's and Jeremy's initials, are carved into the king post for posterity (1.38).

## THE FUTURE

There is always more to be learned or to restore. I continue to research the genealogy of the family, especially its most intriguing mysteries: To whom might Robert Means have been indentured when he arrived in America? Whom did young Thomas impregnate? What prompted Col. Means to resign his senate seat half way through his term in 1791? And, why did Robert and Mary Means wait 43 years before quitting Londonderry's Presbyterian church to be received into Amherst's Congregational church at the twilight of their lives? As for restoration projects, the list is now considerably shorter, but no less interesting. It includes analyzing paint layers to both understand the original color scheme and validate hypotheses about changes to the house; reproducing and reinstalling the historic wallpaper; carefully hand-scraping the polyurethane off of the floors and repainting them; freeing the movable wall in the upper hall; restoring the servant's chamber in the attic; and restoring the ceramic tiles

*1.39 Tile removed from parlor fireplace in late 1950s, manufactured by Sadler and Green of Liverpool, England, 1757–1775.*

long-removed from the fireplace surround in the parlor (1.39). Then there are the archival tasks—creating a complete set of detailed measured drawings and photographs to document the physical structure; writing a book to tell the story of the house and its occupants; and donating my papers and photographs to the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Finally, one must always consider what might seem incredible—a future owner who innocently, ignorantly, or intentionally destroys the historic features of the Col. Robert Means mansion. Realistically, the chance is actually quite high that, at some point, the urges of a future owner to satisfy his or her personal tastes and comfort will trump the hopes of the community that the house be preserved. The Amherst Village Historic District Commission theoretically provides protection to the house's exterior, but the commission's effectiveness is limited by the competence and fortitude of those who sit on it at any given time. The commission is also a political body exposed to conflicts of interest and susceptible to being pressured.[62] And the interior of the house, of course, is entirely vulnerable. Fortunately, there is a solution; an historic preservation easement can be used to protect one, some, or all of the historic features of a house by granting the rights to alter the identified elements to a qualified preservation organization. As soon as practicable, we intend to donate a preservation easement to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (dba Historic New England) to preserve the most important historic attributes of the Col. Robert Means mansion in perpetuity.

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[1] Bill Veillette is executive director of the New Hampshire Historical Society. This article was first presented as a pictorial slide show to the Piscataqua Decorative Arts Society, Portsmouth, N.H., on October 7, 2008. Unless otherwise indicated, all current-day photographs were taken by Veillette.

[2] Hillsborough County (N.H.) Registry of Deeds, Book 3, Page 232; dated May 9, 1774; recorded January 21, 1775.

[3] Edward D. Boylston, *Sketch of a Busy Life at Busyfield and Elsewhere by the One Who Lived It* (Amherst, N.H.: E.D. Boylston, 1892), p. 27.

[4] Daniel F. Secomb, *History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire* (Concord, N.H.: Evans, Sleeper & Woodbury, 1883), p. 348.

[5] Howard Locke papers (Sleeves 28–33; Village Entry 19) located at Amherst Town Library.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Hillsborough County (N.H.) Registry of Deeds, Book 5897, Page 1625; dated January 30, 1998; recorded February 2, 1998.

[9] The six most populous towns according to the 1790 census were: Portsmouth—4,720; Rochester—2,852; Gilmanton—2,610; Londonderry—2,604; Barrington—2,481; and Amherst—2,369.

[10] The Amherst Village Historic District was established by voters at town meeting in 1970, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

[11] Lois Lilley Howe, "The Colonel Robert Means House at Amherst, N.H.," *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*, Vol. XIII, No. 5 (New York: Russell F. Whitehead, 1927), p. 99.

[12] Circumstantial evidence suggests that Robert Means and his cousin, Jacob McGaw, were indentured to Samuel Gibson (1693–1779) of Litchfield, N.H., but I have yet to prove it.

[13] The Governor John Langdon mansion was built in 1784.

[14] Anne M. Means, *Amherst and Our Family Tree* (Boston: Press of Fleming-Hughes-Rogers, Inc., 1921), pp. 62–63 and 122.

[15] Edward D. Boylston, *Fragrant Memories: or, The Dead of a Hundred Years: 1760–1860. A recall of the Dead of the First Century of the Town of Amherst, N.H., read at the Centennial, May 30, 1860* (Amherst, N.H.: The Farmers' Cabinet Press, 1881), p. 18.

[16] Franklin Jr. was born February 2, 1836 and died February 4, 1836. Congregational Church Vol. II; Records of The Church of Christ in Amherst, New Hampshire, After A.D. 1815 to 1852, July 1st, (Andover, Mass.: Northeast Document Conservation Center, June 1996, for the Historical Society of Amherst, N.H.; Reel 1, Item 2; location Amherst Town Library), p. 279.

[17] The table is now (2009) owned by James and Sarah Ramsay. Jamie's parents bought the table at an auction of the contents of the Means house in the 1950s.

[18] Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893), pp. 334–335.

[19] The other is the Col. Paul Wentworth house, Salmon Falls, N.H. (1701). The Wentworth house was moved to Dover, Mass., in 1937, returned to Rollinsford, N.H., in 2002, and opened to the public in 2005.

[20] Abbott Lowell Cummings of Deerfield, Mass., gets the credit for being the one to describe the house to me as "generic."

[21] Thomas Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1984), p. 6.

[22] John Butler of Hollis, N.H., who has an impressive knowledge of builders' guides and pattern books, and Abbott Lowell Cummings share the credit for attributing features of the Means mansion to Hoppus's *Repository*. Lois Lilley Howe was apparently unaware of the connection, judging from her musings about the house in *The White Pine Series* (p. 103): "And as we look at all the refinements of the finish even at some of its naiveties and crudities, we wonder where and how the weaver who peddled his goods about the country learned how to choose his proportions and details so wisely." Thanks to John and Abbott, we now know.

[23] Secomb, p. 689.

[24] Lawrence B. Romaine (ed.), "The Rules of Work, of the Carpenters, in the Town of Boston," *Old-Time New England*, XLV, No. 3 (Winter 1955), p. 81. This reference was provided by James L. Garvin, State Architectural Historian, New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources.

[25] Edward Hoppus, *The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository: or, Architecture Display'd*, Fourth Edition (London: Printed for C. Hitch and L. Hawes, *et al*, 1760).

[26] In a correspondence with George Washington, Dr. William Thornton wrote in reference to balustrades that it is "a Desideratum in Architecture to hide as much as possible the Roof." See William Thornton to George Washington, December 25, 1798, copy in Papers of George Washington, Office, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

[27] Tony Hall of New Boston, N.H., who built the balustrade, gets the credit for bringing to my attention a photograph of the Schuyler mansion that he found in Bill Harris's *Grand Homes of the Mid-Atlantic* (New York: Crescent Books; distributed by Crown Publishers, 1989), p. 15. I subsequently visited the mansion to photograph its balustrade and get a copy of its historic structure report.

[28] I am indebted to Jim Garvin for his expert research and opinions on the balustrade design. Jim did not rule out Chinese work, but

concluded that diamond work was more common in New Hampshire. Nonetheless, I am satisfied with the historic district commission's decision to use the Schuyler house's balustrade pattern as I also favored it, although for different reasons. My reasons were: 1) The Schuyler house's Chinese pattern almost exactly matches the engraver's interpretation in the woodcut. As long as a Chinese pattern was plausible, I was reluctant to deviate any more from the already second-generation interpretation (i.e., the engraving, which was based on a first-generation drawing) and risk adding yet a third interpretation to the mix; 2) Other evidence suggests that the house's design may have been influenced more by Massachusetts than New Hampshire architecture. (See the discussion below on the attribution of the Dunlap carving in the parlor.) And Chinese work appears to have been more prevalent in Massachusetts.

[29] Terrence M. Russell, *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary in the Eighteenth Century: Architecture, Arts and Crafts; Volume 3: The Builder's Dictionary* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 1997), p. 46.

[30] *Articles of the Carpenters Company of Philadelphia: and Their Rules for Measuring and Valuing House-Carpenters Work* (Philadelphia: Printed by Hall and Sellers, 1786), p. 34. This reference was provided by Jim Garvin.

[31] Marcus Whiffen, *The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: A Study of Architecture and Building in the Colonial Capital of Virginia,* revised edition (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984), pp. 83–88.

[32] In an orthographic projection, related views of an object are presented as if they were all in the same plane and projected in a single view. Elevation drawings, for example, are orthographic projections.

[33] *The Farmers' Cabinet,* Vol. 35, No. 32 (Amherst, N.H., April 7, 1837), p. 4.

[34] Tailings are the stones that are left over at the "tail" end of multiple screenings of gravel.

[35] Hoppus, *Repository,* pp. 91–92.

[36] Also note that the petals of the quatrefoil are heavily drilled or punched, which may be another clue as to the geographical influence of the carving or the home base of the carver.

[37] The Nathan Kendall house is at 6 Mack Hill Rd., Amherst, N.H.

[38] William Bentley, D.D., *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts,* Vol. 2, January, 1793 – December, 1802 (Salem, Mass.: The Essex Institute, 1907), pp. 232–233. Betsy Garrett Widmer found this reference.

[39] Means, p. 240.

[40] Charles S. Parsons, *The Dunlaps & Their Furniture* (Manchester, N.H.: The Currier Gallery of Art, 1970), pp. 16 and 21, endnotes 86 and 87, and Fig. 101.

[41] Let's call this a bracket shape.

[42] The paneling of the King Hooper house's hall was sold in 1933 to the co-located William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Art in Kansas City, Mo., now known as The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The rest of the house was disassembled and moved to 2401 Kalorama Rd. NW, Washington, D.C., where it survives today. See Sandra Fleishman, "The Mansion That Found A 2nd Home," *The Washington Post* (October 22, 2005), p. F1.

[43] Based on his notes, Parsons believed the Dunlaps' flowered ogee was influenced by the carving on the chimneypiece in the Governor's Council Chamber of the Wentworth-Coolidge house, Little Harbor, N.H. I think he was he too parochial in looking for clues to the origins of Dunlap's work only within the artificial (i.e., governmentally-decreed) borders of New Hampshire. Bedford and its surrounding towns were tied economically more to the Merrimack River valley and Boston than to the Piscataqua region. Indeed, Dunlap died in Billerica, Mass., on a return trip from Boston. See Philip Zea and Donald Dunlap, *The Dunlap Cabinetmakers: A Tradition in Craftsmanship* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994), p.15.

[44] This scrap piece of ogee molding, with its original pencil drawing, was found in the east wall of the parlor by carpenter Tony Hall, New Boston, N.H., on September 23, 2002, while inspecting and repairing sills. The molding profile matches that of the cyma reversa element of the three-part bolection molding on the architrave surrounding the firebox in the parlor. It is curious that the pencil drawing on the molding exactly matches the design of the "floward og" [flowered ogee] of the Dunlap family of cabinetmakers, rather than that of the Massachusetts-inspired carving on the chimneypiece of the Means house parlor itself; it is as though someone had drawn on the scrap piece with pencil to demonstrate the Dunlap design, then tossed it into the wall cavity. Without a doubt, this scrap piece with its pencil drawing dates to the 1785 construction of the main block of the Means house; the clapboards and sills in this area had never been disturbed, and scraps of other molding types from the parlor were found mixed in with original construction debris resting on the sills within the parlor walls. As for whether carved ogee stock could have been imported and simply assembled by the Dunlaps (or others), there are clues in the carving itself to suggest that this is unlikely. For example, the carving within the small crosettes at the corners of the architrave shows how the incised design was altered in process to fit within the very short runs of molding between the miter joints (1.21). Also, not a single carved pattern is cut through at the miter joint, which indicates the pattern was laid out and carved *after* the miters were either marked or cut.

[45] There is evidence that Robert Means used other local talent to build his mansion. A board in the southernmost attic dormer bears the chalk inscription, "Ebenezer Mills 1784." Ebenezer was the 14-year-old son of Capt. John Mills, a carpenter living in the northwest parish of Amherst (now Mont Vernon). The construction of the dormers indicates that they were installed as the sheathing went on the frame (i.e., the dormers are not framed—they are simply constructed out of sheathing material). It is plausible that Means hired Mills to frame and "board" his house.

[46] Zea and Dunlap, p. 14. Zea describes the Scots-Irish as a close-knit community that, "symbolically or coincidentally, …liked to move among themselves." Unfortunately, as Parsons recognized, the Dunlaps' "account books do not record any work at this house." (Parsons, p. 16.) But, John Dunlap appears to have made regular purchases from Robert Means's brother-in-law, Robert McGregor, including tools and glass for window sash. (Parson, p. 22 and endnote 83.) Could McGregor have recommended Dunlap to Means?

[47] Zea and Dunlap, pp. 23 (Fig. 9) and 24; Parsons, Fig. 6.

[48] *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers* (hereinafter *NHSP),* XX, pp. 811 and 825.

[49] The other two nominations were: Robert McGregor of Goffstown for colonel of the Ninth Regiment of the militia, and Joshua Atherton of Amherst for justice of the peace of Hillsborough County. Robert McGregor was Means's brother-in-law. Joshua Atherton was his neighbor and closest friend, whose daughter, Catherine, and granddaughter, Abigail Kent, married Means's sons, David and Robert Jr., respectively. Robert Means clearly used his position as councilor to reward his relative, associate, and best friend. Ironically, one year before Means was elected to the council, he served on a committee "to enquire into the conduct of the Council the past year." (*NHSP,* XX, p. 347.) One of the accusations was that councilors were enriching their friends and relatives by appointing them to civil and military offices.

[50] Unfortunately, Means's probate inventory does not survive, so we do not know what books he owned. And there is no conclusive evidence in John Dunlap's inventory that he had any pattern books in his possession when he died. (Parsons, pp. 36–37 and 58.)

[51] Dunlap's surviving account books, photographed copies of which are in the Parsons papers at the New Hampshire Historical Society, show no entries for any transactions with Robert Means. If Dunlap did design and build the house, either he or Means could have kept a separate account book just for the project. Tantalizingly, Parsons discovered that "plans as well as an account book" were sold by the Dunlap family in the 1930s, "but these cannot be traced." (Parsons, pp. 7 and 22.) The manuscripts were sold with a tall clock that is now owned by Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.

[52] I figure she wanted a mantel for mementos because she also had a thin board installed to create a minimal mantel shelf in the parlor.

[53] Howe, p. 102.

[54] Andrew Jackson Downing, *Cottage Residences; Or, a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas, and their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America,* 4th ed., revised and improved (New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1856), p. 6.

[55] The width of the west entrance steps is 30", rise is 8", and tread is 7½".

[56] The dimensions of the kitchen steps are variable, but, roughly, their width is 35", rise is 9", and tread is 9".

[57] I finally found a complete bake oven door unit (1.30) made in Amherst, N.H., six years later on eBay! It is now a promised gift to the New Hampshire Historical Society.

[58] What I call glove warmers are wrought iron arms that are pinned to and swing out from the lintel. There is an original glove warmer built into the lintel of the fireplace in the southeast room of the main block of the house.

[59] Experienced users will insert an arm into the oven to judge the temperature by feel. It's less painful to use an oven thermometer.

[60] The ceilings were originally 6'-8" tall when the beams were hidden behind wooden lath and plaster. They are now nearly 7' tall.

[61] Privies have no seat rings for men to lift up and out of the "line of fire," which must have been a source of constant annoyance to the women of those poorer households with "one-holers."

[62] For example, occasionally applicants—in an attempt to gain advantage—will hire a commissioner or his employee to represent them before the commission. (This is clearly unethical, but the rationalization is that it is not illegal.) Although the conflicted commissioner might recuse himself from voting, his presence and his employee's advocacy put pressure on his voting peers, which can result in unfortunate rulings.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY


*Articles of the Carpenters Company of Philadelphia: and Their Rules for Measuring and Valuing House-Carpenters Work.* Philadelphia: Printed by Hall and Sellers, 1786. 47 p. This volume provides detailed information on the measurements of the stock for balustrade fretwork at the time the Col. Means house was built.

"A Yankee Barn Raising." *New Hampshire Chronicles* (October 5, 2001, 7:30–8:30 p.m.). Manchester, N.H.: WBUR Channel 9. The raising of the timber frame of the big barn of the Col. Robert Means house on September 10, 2001 was filmed and aired as a segment on this television series.

"Simple Elegance." *Colonial Homes*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (September/October 1991), pp. 106–109. Modern architectural drawings based on the plan of the Col. Robert Means house are featured in this issue.

Atherton, Charles H. *Memoir of the Hon. Joshua Atherton.* Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Co., 1852. 57 p. Col. Robert Means is mentioned several times in Atherton's memoir. In particular, there is an insider's account of his involvement with the Aurean Academy (p. 42).

Baker, Norman B. *Early Houses of New England.* Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1980 (3rd printing). 144 p. The Col. Robert Means House is highlighted on pp. 92–93. This book provides "up-to-date" architectural plans for selected historic houses complete with formal "English-inspired" garden plans, "all to satisfy the modern homeowner." It is an illuminating example of how little current-day architects revere historic architecture.

Bentley, D.D., William. *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts,* Vol. 2, January, 1793 – December, 1802. Salem, Mass.: The Essex Institute, 1907. 506 p. Bentley gives an account of his visit to Amherst in 1797 during which he was introduced to the Means family (pp. 232–233).

Boas, Norman F. (ed.). *Jane M. Pierce (1806–1863): The Pierce-Aiken Papers.* New London, Conn.: New London Printers, 1983. 113 p. This work documents letters, biographies, and genealogical tables of Jane Pierce and her relatives. Of particular interest is the correspondence of Abigail Atherton Kent Means, who owned and lived in the Col. Robert Means house in the 19th century.

Boas, Norman F. (ed.). *Jane M. Pierce (1806–1863): The Pierce-Aiken Papers Supplement.* Norwich, Conn.: Franklin Impressions, 1989. 58 p.

Boylston, Edward D. *Fragrant Memories: or, The Dead of a Hundred Years: 1760–1860. A recall of the Dead of the First Century of the Town of Amherst, N.H., read at the Centennial, May 30, 1860.* Amherst, N.H.: The Farmers' Cabinet Press, 1881. 36 p. This long historical poem contains verses describing Col. Robert Means, his sons David and Robert Jr., his son-in-law Jesse Appleton, and the young Franklin Pierce.

Boylston, Edward D. (comp.). *Historical Sketch of the Hillsborough County Congresses, Held at Amherst, (N.H.), 1774 & 1775, with other Revolutionary records.* Amherst, N.H.: Farmers' Cabinet Press, 1884. 53 p. This sketch documents "Robert Main" as one of the "Retailers for the County of Hillsborough, Licensed Oct. T[erm]. 1771" in Merrimack (p. 45).

Boylston, Edward D. *Sketch of a Busy Life at Busyfield and Elsewhere by the One Who Lived It.* Amherst, N.H.: E.D. Boylston, 1892. 184 p. Boylston recalls what Amherst looked like in his boyhood and describes the "Means mansion, with store on line of front fence, and but a drive-way between" (p. 27).

Cole, Doris, and Taylor, Karen Cord. *The Lady Architects: Lois Lilley Howe, Eleanor Manning and Mary Almy, 1893–1937.* New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1990. 145 p. This work documents Lois Lilley Howe and her first all-female architectural firm in Boston.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *Cottage Residences; Or, a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas, and their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America,* 4th ed., revised and improved. New York: Wiley & Halsted, 1856. 215 p. According to Jim Garvin, "Downing's book was the first American publication to discuss domestic architecture in terms that were understandable and appealing to the householder; it was all the more revolutionary for its frequent discussions of household affairs and arrangements that were of special interest to women." (Garvin, p. 118.)

Embury II, Aymar. "A Comparative Study of a Group of Early American Windows." *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs,* Vol. XVI, No. 2. New York, NY: Russell F. Whitehead, 1930. 27 p. The window on the east parlor wall of the Col. Robert Means house is featured in this study.

Farmer, John, and Moore, Jacob B. (eds.). *Collections, Historical and Miscellaneous: and a Monthly Literary Journal,* Vol. II. Concord, N.H.: J.B. Moore, March 1823. Appendix, p. 16. The appendix in this volume contains a very brief eulogy of Col. Robert Means.

Farmer, John, and Moore, Jacob B. (eds.). *Collections, Historical and Miscellaneous: and a Monthly Literary Journal,* Vol. II. Concord, N.H.: J.B. Moore, April 1823. pp. 112–117. This volume contains a transcript of the Rev. Nathan Lord's sermon eulogizing Col. Robert Means.

Farmer, John, and Moore, Jacob B. (eds.). *A Gazetteer of the State of New-Hampshire, embellished with an accurate map of the state, and several other engravings: by Abel Bowen.* Concord, N.H.: Jacob B. Moore, 1823. pp. 69–71. This gazetteer contains "the early history of each town…and short biographical notices of the most distinguished and useful men" of which Col. Robert Means is one. Coincidentally, since it was published in the year Robert Means died, it gives a good picture of New Hampshire at the end of his life.

Foster, Gerald. *American Houses: A Field Guide to the Architecture of the Home.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004. 400 p. The front entrance of the Col. Robert Means house is used as an example of a Georgian doorway (p. 35).

Garvin, James L. *A Building History of Northern New England.* Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001. 199 p. Garvin emphasizes that "buildings betray regional variations within relatively short distances" and devotes his work to the "localized construction practices, stylistic preferences, and vernacular building forms" of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Hale, Judson. "House for Sale: In the Room with Franklin Pierce." *Yankee* (September 1997). pp. 36–42. The Col. Robert Means house is the subject of this issue's "house for sale" feature.

Hayward, John. *The New England Gazetteer; containing descriptions of all the states, counties and towns in New England: also descriptions of the principal mountains, rivers, lakes, capes, bays, harbors, islands, and fashionable resorts within that territory.* Sixth edition. Concord, N.H.: Israel S. Boyd and William White, 1839. 508 p. Henry David Thoreau carried a copy of this *Gazetteer* with him as he travelled up the Merrimack River when writing his book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers,* in 1849. In his book, Thoreau cites the references to Col. Robert Means that appear in the *Gazetteer.*

Hill, William Carroll. *The Family of Captain John Mills of Medway and Sherborn, Mass. and Amherst, N.H.* Milford, N.H.: The Cabinet Press, 1902. 136 p. Captain John Mills may have framed and sheathed—but probably did not design or finish—the Col. Robert Means house.

The Historical Society of Amherst, N.H. *Amherst, New Hampshire 1881/1982: A Sleeping Town Awakens.* Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Publishing, 1982. 304 p. There are accounts in this volume of descendants of the Means family who occupied the Col. Robert Means house. One interesting account describes how summers did not begin in Amherst until the owners of the Means house, and those of two other prominent houses, arrived from Boston and Manchester.

Hoppus, Edward. *The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository: or, Architecture Display'd.* Fourth Edition. London: Printed for C. Hitch and L. Hawes, *et al,* 1760. See Harris: 358. This is probably the pattern book used to design features of the Col. Robert Means house. The proportions of the front door, carved rosettes on the stair panel, and "flowered ogee" on the parlor paneling match those examples in Plates 33, 57, and 58.

Howe, Lois Lilley, and Whitehead, Russell (ed.). "The Colonel Robert Means House at Amherst, N.H." *The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs,* Vol. XIII, No. 5. New York, NY: Russell F. Whitehead, 1927. 23 p. The Col. Robert Means house is one of two houses in New Hampshire that was the sole subject of its own monograph in *The White Pine Series.* Howe makes comparisons between the Means house and the Jeremiah Lee Mansion in Marblehead, Mass.

Hubka, Thomas. *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England.* Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1984. 225 p. While the principal focus of Hubka's work is connected farm buildings, he also makes reference to connected structures in village settings.

James, Edward T. (ed.). *Notable American Women 1607–1960: A Biographical Dictionary.* Vol. III. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971. Lloyd C. Taylor Jr. wrote the entry for Jane Pierce and mentions a diary kept by Abigail Atherton Means during her time in the White House. (See Means, Abigail.)

Joy, H., and Joy, R. *The Belfast [Ireland] News-Letter and General Advertiser* (April 1 – June 10, 1766). See *The Belfast Newsletter Index, 1737–1800,* compiled by John C. Greene, which I accessed on November 22, 2007 at www.ucs.louisiana.edu/bnl/. Surviving newsletters are in the collections of the Linen Hall Library, Belfast, Northern Ireland, and microfilmed copies are available at the Boston Public Library.

Kelly, Michael. *The Mayne Family: in Ireland (Part 1); The Mayne Family: Relations and Acquaintances (Part 2)* and *The Means (Mayne) Family from Stewartstown & Amherst, New Hampshire (Part 3),* updated January 1, 2006. England: unpublished typescripts, 2006. Michael's wife Brigid Mary Philip Kelly is descended from Col. Robert Means's brother, Thomas Mayne (1747–1827). Michael is the only person I have found so far that has written up his research of the Thomas Mayne family in Ireland and Scotland. I have yet to do my own research across the Atlantic.

Kent, Moody. Six bound volumes of manuscripts as follows: *Memoranda, 1836–37–38; Memoranda, 1842–43–44; Drafts of Letters, Jan. 1846 to Jan. 1850; Drafts of Letters, Jan. 1850 to Jan. 1854; Conversations;* and *Lives, 2.* It appears as though there are at least two volumes missing, which might be entitled: *Memoranda, 1839–40–41* and *Lives, 1.* Supposedly, somewhere in these journals is the story of Daniel Webster having drunk too much, passed out, and spent the night on the dining room table of the Col. Robert Means house. Unfortunately, because Kent's handwriting is so poor, no one has been able to read the manuscripts to find the reference to Webster's alleged incident. The journals are currently (2009) in my possession, but will eventually be donated to the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Lead Industries Association. "A Portfolio of American Landmarks No. 26: Two Houses Widely Separated Show Similarity." *Lead,* Vol. 14, No. 4 (July–August 1944), p. 7. This article compares the Col. Robert Means house to the William Gibbs house in Charleston, S.C., and lauds the patriotic practice of using pure white lead paint to preserve such historic landmarks.

Locke, Emma P. Boylston (comp.). *Colonial Amherst: The Early History, Customs and Homes.* Milford, N.H.: W.B. and A.B. Rotch, 1916. 122 p. This book contains the account of the Means store having burned in the Great Fire of 1863. It also illustrates an artist's conception of the Col. Robert Means house, his store, and other buildings along the street prior to the fire.

Locke, Howard. *Howard Locke Papers* (Sleeves 28–33; Village Entry 19), located at Amherst Town Library, Amherst, N.H. Locke was the electrician who originally wired most of the homes in Amherst. He compiled a vast collection of information on the historic houses in the town. Most of Locke's photographs are now (2009) in the possession of Richard Crocker, Amherst, N.H.

Means, Abigail Atherton Kent. *White House Diary.* 1853–1855. Concerning this diary, Norman F. Boas wrote (p. 111), "Referred to by Lloyd C. Taylor, Jr. in 1955, who borrowed this volume from Prof. William A. Aiken of Lehigh University. In 1971 he refers to it again as belonging to Aiken's widow. Its present whereabouts [1983] are unknown. The diary contained extensive notes concerning Jane Pierce." I have searched for the diary to no avail.

Means, Anne M. *Amherst and Our Family Tree.* Boston: Press of Fleming-Hughes-Rogers, Inc., 1921. 414 p. This book provides the most detailed account to date of the history of the Col. Robert Means and Hon. Joshua Atherton families through family letters and oral tradition.

Means, Col. Robert, and Means, David McGregor. *Account, transfer and deposit notebooks, 1806–1829,* 10 volumes. Amherst, N.H.: manuscripts, 1806–1829. These notebooks were given to the Historical Society of Amherst, N.H., in 1981 by Mrs. Allen (Elna) Howard, who acquired them from a previous owner of the Col. Robert Means house, Agnes Tucker Carruth (see accession record 81.10.01 thru 81.10.10). These may be the account books for the store, which David took over from his father Col. Robert Means in 1823. They cannot now be found.

Means Jr., Robert. *Account Book—Robert Means [Jr.], From 1836 until the time of his death in 1842.* Lowell, Mass.: Robert Means Jr., 1836–1842. 79 p. Original manuscript privately owned by W. Gordon Means, Carlisle, Mass.; digital copy in the collections of the Historical Society of Amherst, N.H.

Meilach, Dona Z. *Fireplace Accessories.* Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing Co., 2002. 256 p. This is an anthology of mostly modern fireplace ironwork. The restoration of the cooking fireplace in the ell of the Col. Robert Means house was in process as this book was being compiled. Photographs, descriptions of the work-in-progress, and attributions to the craftsmen are found on pp. 194–195. The captions contain errors.

Merrimack Town History Committee. *The History of Merrimack, New Hampshire, Volume I.* Merrimack, N.H.: Merrimack Historical Society, Inc., 1976. 370 p. There is a modest amount of information in this volume on Robert Means's cousin Jacob McGaw. A picture of the tavern run by McGaw and Means appears on p. 61. The tavern was disassembled in 1970 and moved to Meetinghouse Road in Bedford, N.H.

Miner, Myrtilla, and O'Connor, Ellen M. *Myrtilla Miner; a Memoir* and *The School for Colored Girls* (1885, 1854, respectively), reprint. New York: Arno Press, 1969. Abigail Means is mentioned as having regularly visited Miss Miner's school during her time at the White House.

Nichols, Roy Franklin. *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills.* 2nd ed., 2nd printing. Norwalk, Conn.: Easton Press, 1969. 625 p. This biography contains a number of references to Abigail A. Means and, of course, Jane Pierce.

Parker, Rev. Edward L. *History of Londonderry, Comprising the Towns of Derry and Londonderry, N. H.* Boston: Perkins and Whipple, 1851. 358 p. This history contains accounts of Mary McGregor Means and her father the Rev. David McGregor.

Parsons, Charles S. *Charles Sumner Parsons Papers: 1955–1987,* New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N.H. Boxes 24 and 28 contain correspondence, research notes, photocopies, transcripts, and photographs of house interiors where Parsons attributed the finish work in the parlor of the Col. Robert Means house to the Dunlaps.

Parsons, Charles S. *The Dunlaps & Their Furniture.* Manchester, N.H.: The Currier Gallery of Art, 1970. 310 p. Parsons is the one who attributes the carved paneling in the parlor of the Means house to the Dunlaps. A photograph of the parlor appears in the book.

Patten, Matthew. *The Diary of Matthew Patten of Bedford, N.H. from 1754 to 1788.* Camden, Maine: Picton Press, 1993. 596 p. Matthew Patten's diary contains numerous entries for purchases he made from Robert Means from 1770–1772 when Means was living in Merrimack and 1774–1787 when Means was living in Amherst. The original four manuscript volumes of the diaries are at the New Hampshire Historical Society (NHHS Manuscripts Collection, No. 1932-5).

Russell, Terrence M. *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary in the Eighteenth Century: Architecture, Arts and Crafts; Volume 3: The Builder's Dictionary.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 1997. 268 p. This dictionary was first printed in London in 1734.

Secomb, Daniel F. *History of the Town of Amherst, Hillsborough County, N.H.* Concord, N.H.: Evans, Sleeper & Woodbury, 1883. 978 p. This history contains accounts of Col. Robert Means, his wife, and their descendants. It also illustrates a wood engraving of the house as it probably appeared in the mid-19th century.

Semes, Steven W. "Modern Architecture: or, What is a Period Style?" *Clem Labine's Period Homes.* Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000. pp. 117–118 and 122. The Col. Robert Means house is illustrated in this article as an example of Georgian period architecture found in New England.

Sinnett, Charles Nelson (comp.). *Ancestor Hon. Robert Means and Descendants.* Carthage, S.D.: typescript, 1928. 14 p. This genealogical account of Col. Robert Means and his descendants is full of errors. One should not rely on any of this information without validating it from a primary source.

Taylor, Lloyd C. Jr. "A Wife for Mr. Pierce." *New England Quarterly,* Vol. 28 (September 1955), pp. 339–348. In this piece on Jane Pierce, Taylor mentions a diary kept by Abigail Atherton Means during her time in the White House. (See Means, Abigail.)

Thoreau, Henry David. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.* New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893. 531 p. Thoreau writes, "Every town which we passed, if we may believe the [Hayward's New England] Gazetteer [of 1839], had been the residence of some great man. But though we knocked at many doors, and even made particular inquiries, we could not find that there were any now living. (p. 334) …—'Hon. Robert Means, who died January 24, 1823, at the age of 80, was for a long period a resident in Amherst. He was a native of Ireland. In 1764 [1766] he came to this country, where, by his industry and application to business, he acquired a large property, and great respect.'" (p. 335)

Tolles, Bryant F. *New Hampshire Architecture: An Illustrated Guide.* Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England (for the New Hampshire Historical Society), 1979. 393 p. The Col. Robert Means house is one of two Amherst homes selected for inclusion in this catalog of architecturally-significant properties in New Hampshire.

Veillette, William P. *Journals, May 3, 2001 – present.* Amherst, N.H.: William P. Veillette, 2001 – present. These manuscript journals document the rehabilitation work on the Col. Robert Means house as well as some ancillary events in Amherst's village. They are now in my possession, but will eventually end up at the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Veillette, William P. *Correspondence; research notes; plans & drawings; photographs; and invoices & accounts.* Amherst, N.H.: William P. Veillette, 1998 – present. These papers document the research and work on the Col. Robert Means house and its occupants. They are now in my possession, but will eventually end up at the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Venzke, Jane Walter, and Venzke, Craig Paul. "The President's Wife, Jane Means Appleton Pierce: A Woman of Her Time." *Historical New Hampshire,* Vol. 59, No. 1 (Spring 2005). pp. 45–63. This article includes the first published photograph of Abigail Atherton Kent Means.

Watson, Robert P., and Eksterowicz, Anthony J. (eds.). *The Presidential Companion: Readings on the First Ladies.* Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2003. pp. 77–101. This chapter, entitled "True Women," by Elizabeth Lorelei Thacker-Estrada, gives an interesting overview of Jane Pierce as "chief mourner."

Whiffen, Marcus. *The Eighteenth-Century Houses of Williamsburg: A Study of Architecture and Building in the Colonial Capital of Virginia,* revised edition. Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1984. While the regional architecture of colonial Williamsburg differed materially from that of the Merrimack River valley of New Hampshire, builders shared a common source for rules on proportions in London-published pattern books and builders' guides.

Whitehead, Russell (ed.). "The Means-Carruth House, Amherst, New Hampshire: Measured Drawing by Kenneth Clark—from the George F. Lindsay Collection." *Pencil Points: An Illustrated Monthly Journal for the Drafting Room* (March 1929). New York: Pencil Points Press, Inc., 1929. p. 184. This drawing of the details of the front entrance to the Col. Robert Means house appears to be contemporary with the drawings in *The White Pine Series* monograph (Vol. XIII, No 5.), which shows a bolection molding at the base of the pedestal which was a poorly-executed repair and not an original feature. This molding has now been replaced with a type more appropriate to the classical order of the frontispiece.

Wilson, Harriet E. *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black."* New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2005. 103 p. This autobiography, written by a former mulatto indentured servant who lived in Milford, N.H., makes reference to a schoolteacher under the pseudonym "Miss Marsh" (p. 19). Footnote 11 (pp. 88–89) suggests that Miss Marsh is Abigail Atherton Kent Means.

Young, Philip. *The Private Melville.* University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993. 163 p. The author references an 1853 letter written by Justice Lemuel Shaw to Caleb Cushing, political advisor to President Franklin Pierce, which indicates the Melvill family in Boston was "intimate" with that of Col. Means of Amherst, N.H. William Gordon Means's sister-in-law, Mrs. Nathaniel Tracy—whose maiden name was Anne Middleton Allen (1798–1869)—was the illegitimate half-sister of the author Herman Melville. Shaw was writing Cushing to press for the appointment of his son-in-law, Herman Melville, to a consulship in Hawaii.

Zea, Philip, and Dunlap, Donald. *The Dunlap Cabinetmakers: A Tradition in Craftsmanship.* Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994. Zea does an excellent job of describing the Scots-Irish community in New Hampshire in the eighteenth century, as well as the distinctive furniture of the Dunlap family of cabinetmakers.