

EVOLVING LANDSCAPE

Maude Greenleaf's Old River Road, the one where "there were fertile farms on either side, happy homes, grand old trees of Elm and Oak, lush green meadows where at dusk the sweet sad call of the whip-poor-will could be heard," is no longer with us.

Forests have taken back meadows, water covers the fields and dilapidated foundations are all that remain of those homes. But the Old River Road still exists for those who choose to take the time to find it. The foundations hold glimpses into a past life, and the evolving wildlife never stops telling tales.

Maude Greenleaf, who grew up to be a school teacher, would most likely appreciate the fact that her old neighborhood is now a place where we can all learn about the passage of time and the regenerative powers of nature.

*The text was written by Lisa Giguere,
a member of the Androscoggin Land Trust.*

The information contained in this brochure is based on research conducted at Bates College by Ethan Miller, Matt Schlobohm, Ryan Williamson and Matt Ensner with the assistance of Professor Curtis Bohlen

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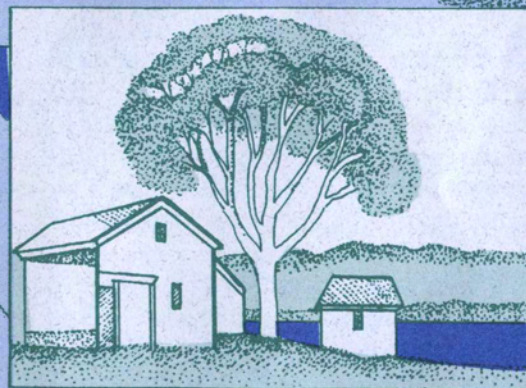


For more information:

ANDROSCOGGIN LAND TRUST

Post Office Box 3145, Auburn, Maine 04212
207-782-2302

THE HOMESTEAD TRAIL



*Androscoggin Riverlands
in Turner, Maine*

THE HOMESTEAD TRAIL

at the Androscoggin Riverlands in Turner

*"I would like to go back to
the old River Road
Twas the loveliest road in town,
And find there the neighbors
that I used to know
And the people who drove
up and down."*



So wrote Maude Greenleaf, a resident of the Old River Road in Turner. Maude always retained fond memories of the neighborhood in which she grew up along the banks of the Androscoggin River, the remnants of which you are about to visit.

Most of the Old River Road and the neighborhood that flourished along it were destroyed in 1927 when the Gulf Island Dam, built by Central Maine Power Company over a two-year period, was completed. The construction of the dam resulted in the creation of the Gulf Island Pond, which stretches 11 miles back and is one mile across at its widest point. In addition to buying the land that was about to be flooded, Central Maine Power was also required by the federal government to purchase a buffer of land to a set elevation along both sides of the river. You are about to walk on a section of this land.

The rising waters displaced not only individual families who had built along the river but the close-knit community there. Gone were homesteads dating back over 100 years, a schoolhouse and several cemeteries. Now, through the work of the State of Maine's Land for Maine's Future program, the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, the Androscoggin Land Trust and four Bates College students and their adviser, Maude Greenleaf's beloved Old River lives again, but in a new way.

There are at least three ways you can approach this trail:

As hikers out for a pleasant walk along one of this area's greatest natural resources, the Androscoggin River; as detectives searching out clues as to how nature regenerates; and as archaeologists studying a lost culture. We think you can handle the first approach on your own. This brochure will give you some directions on the other two. We'll help you identify forestland that used to be pastureland, and we'll give you hints on how to read some of the old foundations you will come across. But keep in mind this brochure only scratches the surface. Feel free to use your imagination as you wander along the trail. Don't hesitate to visit your local library and take out books about forest regeneration and 19th century rural life. And talk to older people who have rich memories about past lives that you otherwise will never know. This hike can be the first step to a larger adventure only you can initiate.

THE TRAIL

To get to the Homestead Trail, pass through the orange gate off the parking lot and follow the wide, dirt multi-use road a short distance to a trailhead on the left that should be marked with a small wooden sign proclaiming "Old Farmstead."



The trail descends into a mixed hardwood/softwood forest and turns right. This is a fairly easy, narrow walking trail that meanders up and down. Depending on the time of year, you may encounter some muddy sections and hungry insects. There are a few narrow log bridges over small streams. But all in all, this is a fairly easy walking trail. It is roughly half a mile to the first foundation. You can hook up to the multi-use road a half mile beyond that and walk back a little over one mile to the parking lot.

Or you can continue on the trail as far as the eighth foundation, which is located another half mile beyond the fourth one. The eighth foundation is very well defined and is worth the trip, but the walk seems longer than the first mile because it is broken up with other foundations to observe.

At this point, hikers can either turn back or continue another third of a mile to the multi-use road. From there, the walk back to the parking lot is roughly one and three quarters of a mile.

There is a total of nine foundations along this trail, but some are not accessible and others are not easily viewed from the trail. This walk will take you by four easy-to-see foundations, but this brochure will focus on only two: those identified on the map as Number 1 and Number 8.



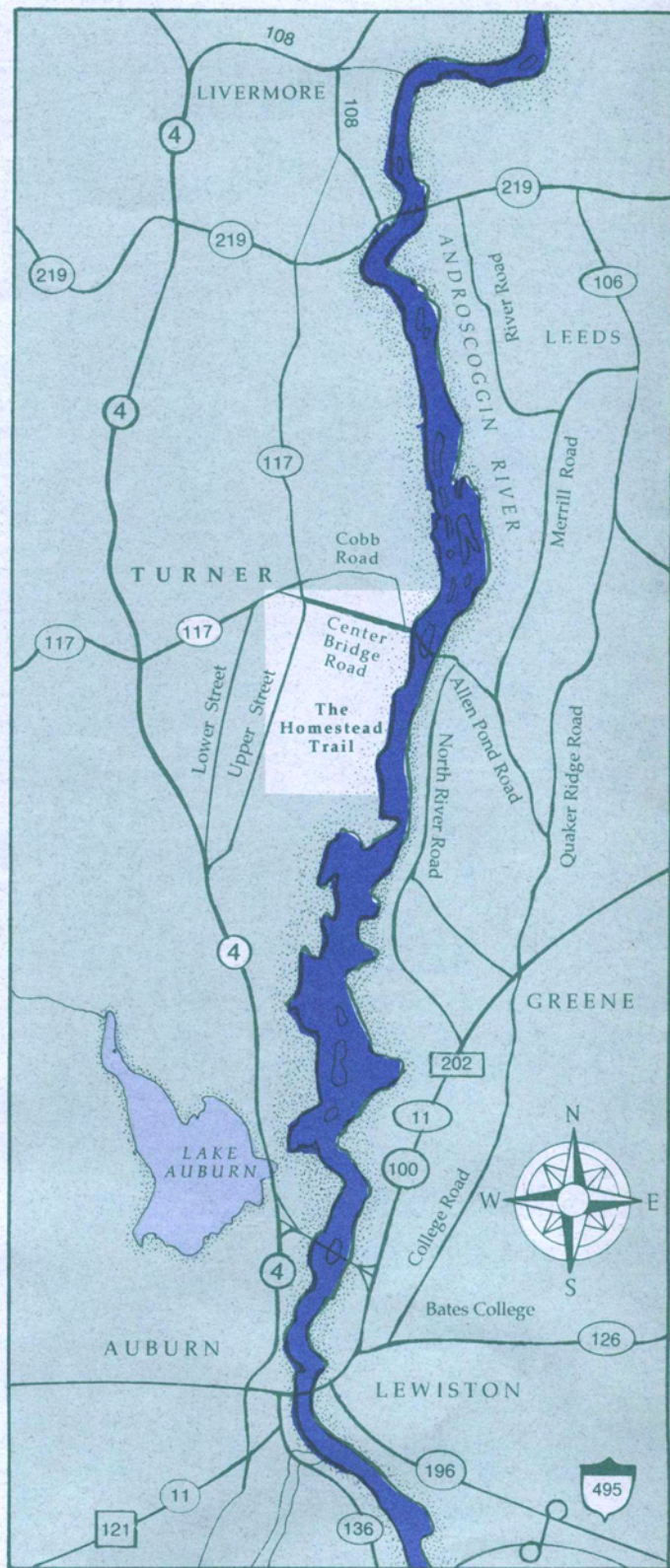
Cinnamon Fern



Oak Fern



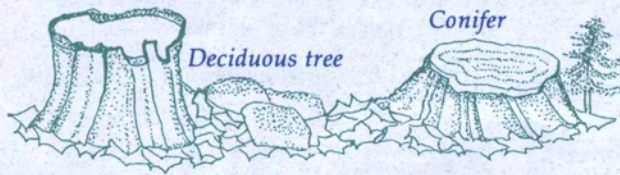
Beech Fern



Location and directions to the Homestead Trail.

THE WALK

As you enter the forest, note the trees around you. The tallest ones, the ones that form the canopy, are primarily hemlock and red maple. The shorter trees are mostly balsam fir, beech and red and sugar maples. Most of these trees are only 30 years old, though some hemlocks appear to be between 50 and 55 years old. The reason the trees are so young is that much of this land has been logged over. You'll see evidence of this logging activity as you walk along. Notice the tree



stumps on the side the trail. It is possible to identify generally what types of trees those stumps used to be by how they are rotting. If a stump is rotting from the outside in, the tree was a conifer; if it is rotting from the inside out, it was a deciduous tree.



If you look to your left as you walk along, you will eventually see the remnants of an old logging road/skidder trail. This trail will merge with one on which you are walking. One clue to help you identify this road is the overgrown ruts. Another clue is the basal scars on the trees near the skidder road.

Basal scars are wounds near the bottom of the trees where bark has been scraped off. These scars were probably caused by a skidder hitting the trees.

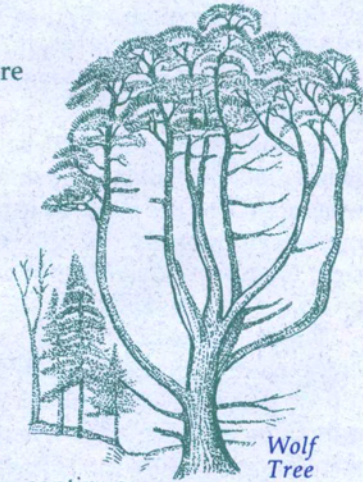
Stone walls were often property boundaries. As you approach the first stone walls to cross the trail, notice the difference in the types of trees. The north side, the side you are coming from, is dominated by hemlock; the south side consists of hemlock and white pine. This is a clue to how the land you are about to cross was used.



Kingfisher Barred Owl Chickadee Whip-poor-will

White pine is one of the first trees to establish itself on cleared land. The land you are now crossing used to be one of Charles Day's pastures. As you approach a stream, note the large white pine to the left. See how its branches spread high and wide? The only way this tree could have grown that way is if there were no other trees around. This means it grew in a pasture where it was not competing with other trees for sunlight.

Such trees are known as "wolf trees" or "pasture trees." Look at that tree again. See how some of the branches seem to turn up suddenly? That clue is an indication of when other trees began to establish themselves around the wolf tree. At this point the wolf tree had to begin competing with other trees for sunlight. You'll see other wolf trees as you continue.



After you cross the stream, notice the large cut stones stacked one on top of the other. You can still see the pin marks where they were split. The stones cut from the rock might have been used for foundations such as those we will see shortly.

Continue up the trail. Just as you start going again, note the ledges to your right. Children used to pick mayflowers along these ledges on their way to school. The East Turner School, also known as the Fine Elms School, was located in Charles Day's pastures, down to your left.

As you continue along the trail, notice other stone walls, wolf trees and ledges.



Trillium Starflower Bunchberry Mayflower

THE HOMESTEAD TRAIL

AT THE ANDROSCOGGIN RIVERLANDS IN TURNER



Homestead Remains

.....
Homestead Trail
(blue blazed)

—————
River Road

- - - - -
River Road Flooded

.....
Multi-Use Trail



Flooded Schoolhouse



*
Sawmill
(abandoned)



Boat Launch

—————
Caleb Gilbert Road
(abandoned)



Mowed Field



Wetlands



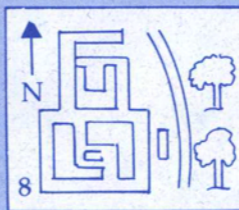
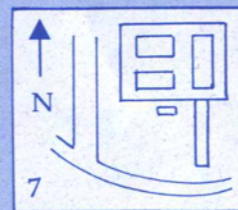
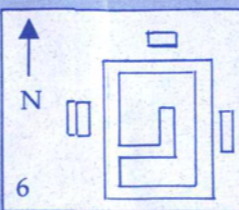
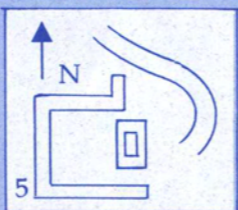
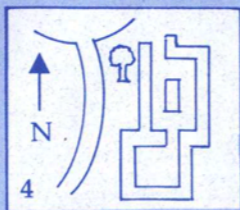
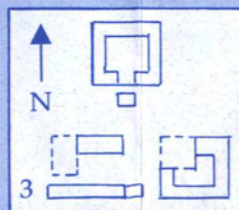
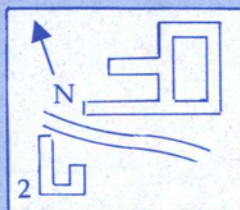
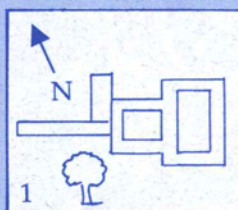
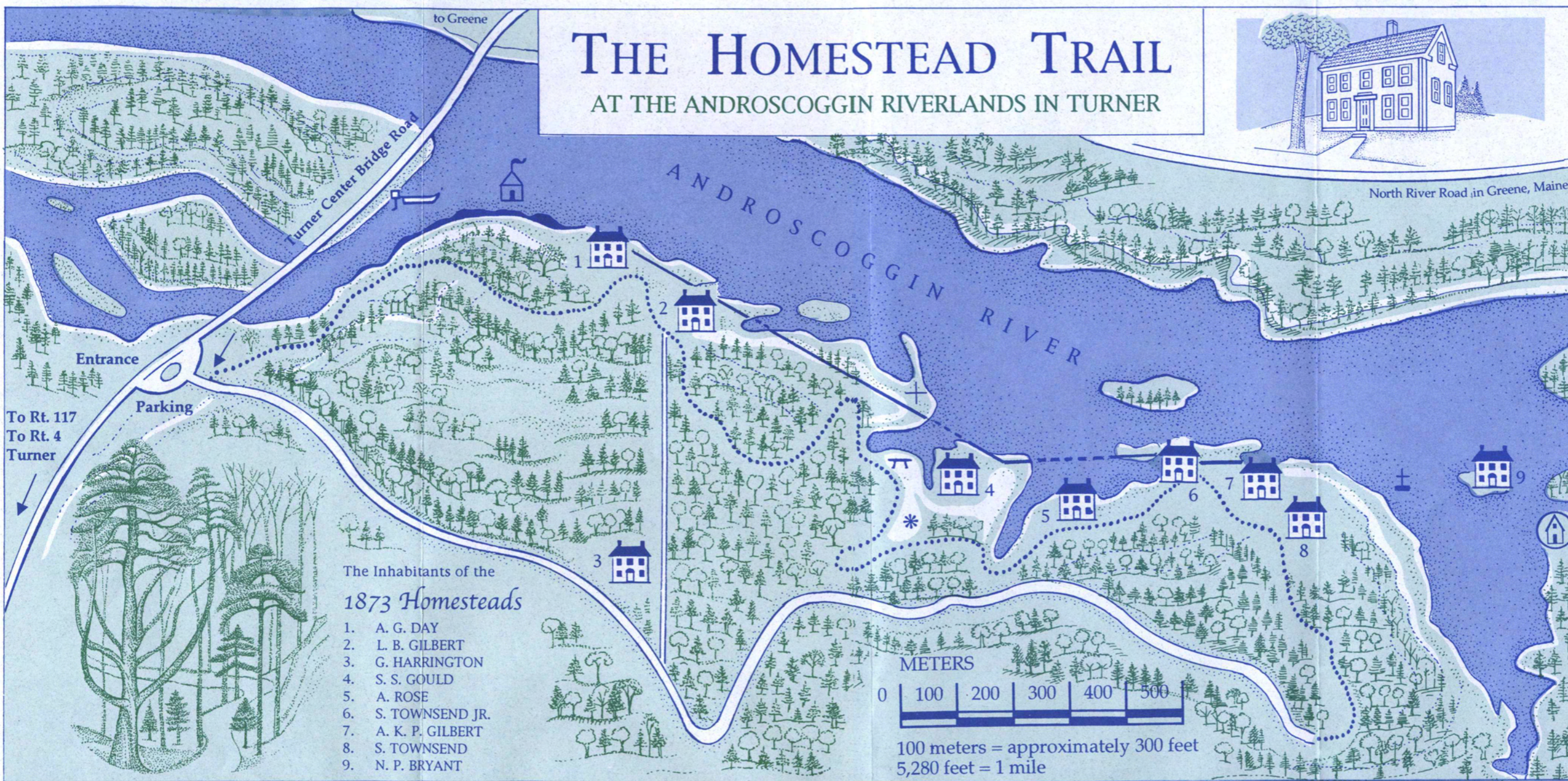
Flooded Homestead



Cemetery



Flooded Cemetery



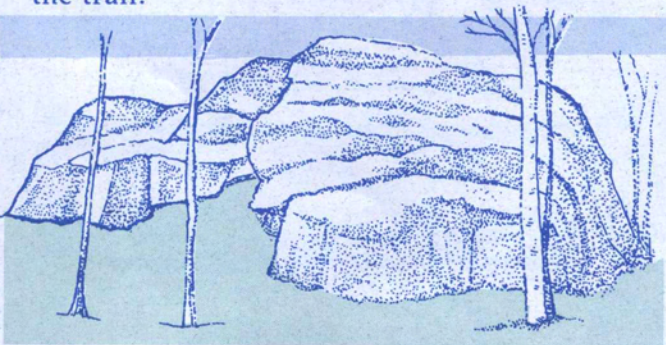
Basic forms of 8 farmstead foundations found on the Homestead Trail facing north along the Androscoggin River.

Please do not disturb the foundations or remove artifacts from the historic sites. It is illegal.

THE FOUNDATIONS

The first foundation you see is one of the most impressive along this trail. Notice the height of the stones. You won't see another foundation of this depth along the trail.

What might surprise you is that this large structure is not the house; this was Charles Day's barn. And a large barn it was, at least two stories high. It is believed the bottom floor, the one you are looking into, housed stables and cow pens. The upper floor was probably used to store hay that could be pitched down to the animals. Notice the stone and earth ramp to the right of the structure as you stand with your back to the trail.



The ledges were formed 408 - 438 million years ago of sedimentary rock - limestones and mud stones - with granitic intrusions.

Remember the ledges and cut stones you saw off the trail? They were probably used to build this foundation and others you will see on your walk. In all likelihood, the stones were dragged to the homestead sites by oxen.

Still keeping your back to the trail, notice the two doors in front of the barn. Then notice the ground immediately beyond those doors. That was the barnyard, a place where animals regularly gathered. Notice how there are no trees in the barnyard. The earth was packed so hard by the animals that to this day trees are unable to establish themselves in this ground.

The barn is only one of the buildings that was located at this site. If you were to walk away from the trail to the barnyard, then continue in that direction, you would reach the foundation of the house. In front of that building is the Old River Road, whose ruts are still visible. And on the other side of the road, where the



Remains of Charles Day's barn on The Homestead Trail.

river now flows, were Charles Day's orchards and vegetable fields.

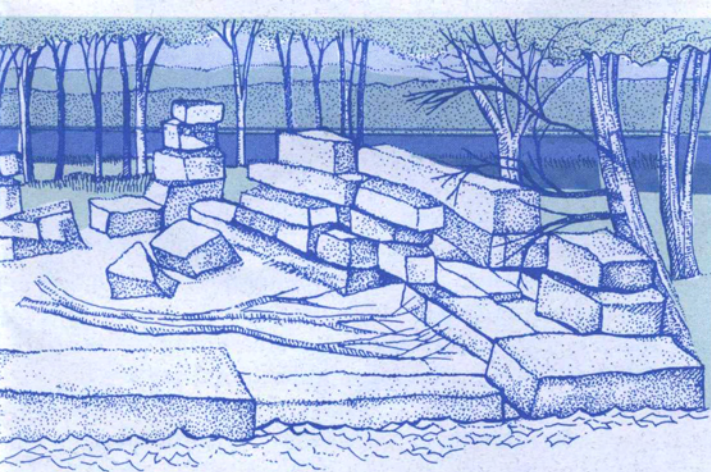
At the first foundation, there is no easy path to the house or the remnants of the Old River Road, but you can walk there if you want to work your way through the overgrown shrubs and bushes. Keep in mind however, the Homestead Trail will follow a section of the River Road further along. Also, you will have a good chance to observe a better preserved house foundation at site Number 8.

If you continue along the trail, you will soon come across a small stone post on the left. If you look closely, you will see the remnants of a house foundation on the left and a barn on the right. These are no where near as well defined as the foundation you just visited. Shortly after this foundation, right before the next stone wall, is the location of the abandoned Caleb Gilbert Road, which is marked on the map. The foundations of the Caleb Gilbert homestead, located near where this abandoned road meets the multi-use road, are difficult to find.

Cross the Caleb Gilbert Road and continue along the Homestead Trail until you cross a log walkway.



A typical stonewall found at the Androscoggin Riverlands.



At this point, you are on the Old River Road. The Old River Road was officially laid out in 1807, but town records indicate some semblance of a road as early as 1803.

As you continue on the road, you will walk by the former location of an old cemetery, on the left, which was moved before the area was flooded. There are no markers to identify this site. When the trail turns right to go around a finger of water, you will no longer be on the Old River Road.

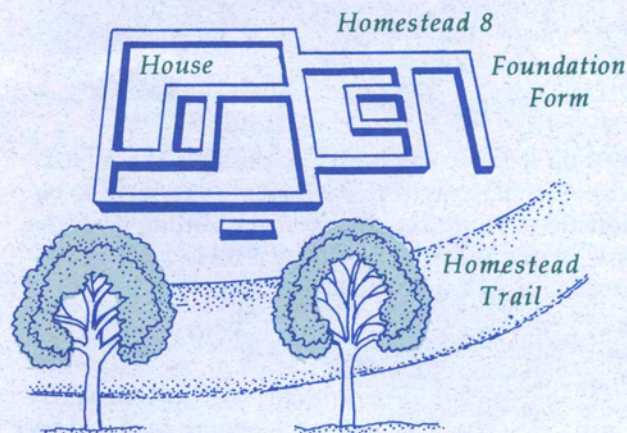
The Homestead Trail will eventually reach a section of the wide multi-use road. If you want to head back, follow that road away from the river. It is roughly one mile to the parking area where you started. Or, if you want to continue on the Homestead Trail, turn left toward the river and watch for the trail to resume on the right. The fourth foundation will be located to your left as you re-enter the walking trail.

When you reach a T intersection, turn right, away from the river. You will soon cross a log bridge. The trail will meander through the woods for about one half mile until you reach foundation Number 8. The first foundation you will see when you reach this



homestead is fairly small. It was probably a storage shed. But look around. You will see two large maple trees. These maples were wedding trees, trees planted when a newly married couple moved into their first home. These two trees were most likely planted when Maude Greenleaf and her husband moved into this house. They frame the front door.

If you walk between the two trees, you will see a stone embedded in the ground, right in front of where the front door was located. The first part of the foundation surrounds a cellar. Cellars like these were usually used to store potatoes and other root vegetables, thus the name "root cellar."



But look beyond the cellar area for another outline, this one partially covered with moss. The house extended beyond the cellar. Old photos and some former residents remember this house as having a huge kitchen, several bedrooms, a door facing the river, a large cellar, an attached ell and a storage area beneath the ell used for storing wood, farming equipment and possibly machinery. There were five windows on the front of the house and two chimneys. The pile of bricks is probably the remains of one of those chimneys.

Just beyond the house, up a slight hill, is another foundation. This is believed to have been the barn. It is not particularly well preserved, but you can probably see that it was a wide structure that did not extend very far back. You might be able to see the ramp that extended from the front right corner of the building, indicating a two-story barn.

From here, you can continue for another one third of a mile to hook up to the multi-use road, or retrace your steps back to foundation Number 4 and pick up the multi-use road there.