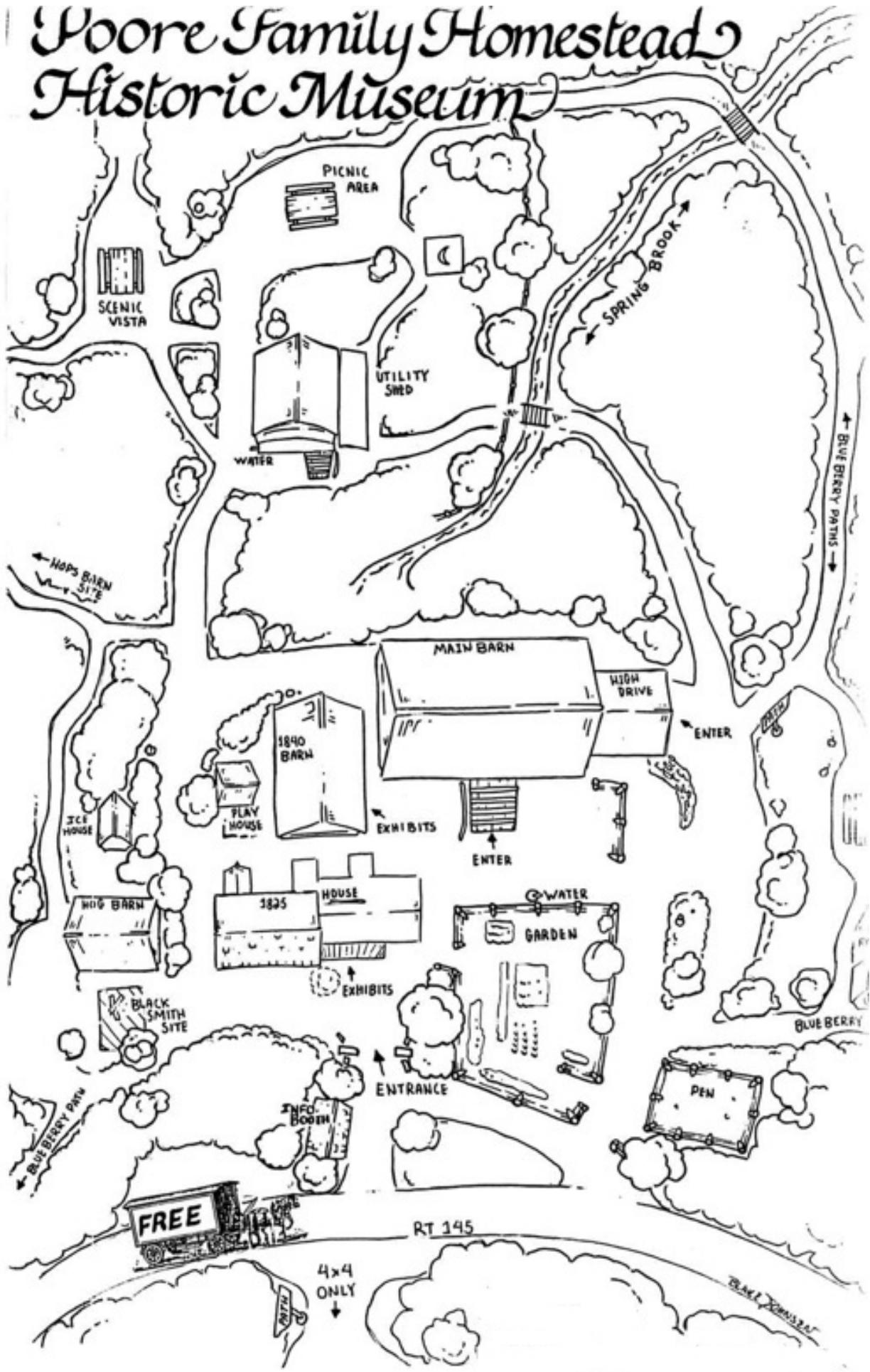


# Poore Family Homestead Historic Museum



**Welcome to the Poore Family Homestead Historic Farm Museum! Whether you have visited us before, or this is your first time, we're sure you'll learn something new. We hope you enjoy your visit.**

**1.** Let's begin by the house. The house was built in 1826 by Moses Heath, and then later sold to Job Poore 1832. Job had recently moved to the area from Franconia, NH, with his second wife and youngest son John.

**A.** The farm has been home to three generations of Poores, the last of which was John Calvin Kenneth, or Kenneth Poore. Kenneth never married, nor had any children. So, there wouldn't have been any heirs to the farm. Instead of letting the farm sit, Kenneth created The Poore Family Foundation for North Country Conservancy, to take care of and run his aging farm. After Kenneth's death in 1983, the farm and all of its contents were bequeathed to the foundation.

**B.** After much cleaning, sorting, and cataloguing, the farm opened up as a museum in 1994. At that time, only the dairy barn was open for a few weekends a summer. Now, the museum has grown to not only include both barns and the house, but a full summer schedule as well.

We must add though, that the museum is still a work in progress. We ask that you please excuse any messes or closed areas around the farm.

**2.** The first room we will visit is the kitchen. This section of the house was added on several years after the Poores first moved in.

**A.** The Poores never had electricity or modern plumbing, even in the later 20th century. They always cooked over either an open hearth, a wood burning cook stove, or a kerosene stove. Water could be drawn from a "water box" located in the back of the house. Water was fed down from a stream located above the back of the dairy barn through wooden pipes, into a metal box. Because it was gravity

fed, the water was constantly running, giving the family an ever-present source of fresh water.

**B.** Before we point out a few artifacts of interest in this room, we'd like to tell you a few things about all of the artifacts in general. First off, we would like you to keep in mind that everything on display was original to the farm. There were objects that the family used. Nothing had been replicated, or brought in. Secondly, what you will see on display today is only a small portion of what was left to the foundation. The family had a habit of keeping everything, and so, we have a large collection. Most of it is in storage, and is in the process of being catalogued.

**C.** Let's go back to the artifacts in the kitchen. If you look towards the back of the kitchen, you should notice the old boxes and tins. When the family would do its shopping in Colebrook, it would take a day's worth of traveling to reach town. So, they didn't Go shopping very often, and when they did, they would stock up.

**D.** Now look toward the left wall. Do you see the basket of eggs? These eggs are made of glass. They were used to trick chickens into laying more. A farmer would place one of these eggs beneath a chicken, tricking it into believing that it had already laid an egg. The chicken would then lay more eggs, and in turn, would produce a very happy farmer.

**3.** Next, take a moment to peek into the summer kitchen. This room would have been used for all of cooking during the summer months, when a stove in the house would have heated it up to an uncomfortable temperature. Many houses in this area of Northern New England include this feature.

**4.** Now, let's walk around to the front of the house. If you look into the first window, you will see the living room. During the mid-1800's, this room would have had a large hearth in it. It would have been used to heat the entire house. Sometime during the

1900's, someone decided to "modernize" the house, and removed the hearth. It was replaced by several wood stoves, placed strategically around the house. Take a moment to look around this room, before proceeding to the left side of the house.

**A.** The next room you can look into is the parlor room. At the time, this room would have been off limits to children, and used only when company came. If you look at the floor, notice the carpeting. This rug was woven on a loom that stands in the dairy barn today. First, someone would have woven several pieces of rug, and then sewn them together. Afterwards, it would have been tacked to the floor over a pad made of newspaper, to create wall to wall carpeting!

**B.** After looking around this room, please proceed along the south side of the house to the next window: the bedroom.

**C.** This bedroom is one of five located in this one and a half story house. While this room may seem small to some, it was average sized for its time. Along the wall of displayed many women's and children's dresses. These are all hand sewn, and were probably worn by Kenneth's mother and sister.

**D.** When you are finished looking at this room, please proceed around the back side of the house, towards the courtyard in front of the barn.

**5.** You now should be facing the smaller of the two barns. This barn was built sometime during the 1840's, and was used to house oxen and sheep. It also was used as a grainery. Grain was stored in the front area in bins, and would have been considered "mouse-proof" at the time. We're not so sure about that, after we found the mousetrap displayed on the barrel.

**A.** After looking at the grainery, walk towards the oxen cart in the main portion of this barn. John Calvin Poore, son of Job and father of Kenneth, used this cart to haul potash. During the 1800's, he would have loaded up the wagon with

potash, which are essentially hardwood ashes. He would then drive the cart to Portland, ME, and exchange them for salt. Salt was very valuable in the North Country, as it was an essential mineral, and because the area is so far from the ocean. The family could have sold the salt and made quite a bit of profit. There was only one problem: the trip took over a month to complete.

**B.** After looking around this area, please enter the dairy barn via the second story ramp. Please use the handrails to enter this area, as the ramp is quite steep, and can be slippery at times.

**6.** Once you have entered the dairy barn, please walk into the room on your left. This room is where the horses would have been kept. Notice the tack (the reins, etc.) on the walls. All of this was found either in this room, or in the blacksmith site.

**A.** At one time, the family would have been keeping either work horses, or buggy horses. It really depended on whether the family had oxen at the time. Either oxen or work horses could be used for hard jobs, like plowing or moving rocks. Oxen had the advantage of not being very skiddish, although they were slow.

**B.** Buggy horses were necessary for, obviously, pulling buggies. These kinds of horses were much smaller than work horses, and couldn't handle the same type of loads. But, their smaller size was better for pulling people.

**C.** When you are finished looking around this room, please exit this room and walk to your left, towards the main barn.

**7.** Welcome to the main barn. This is the best area to see how a high drive dairy barn was designed, and how it worked. First, look over towards the large, empty area in front of you. This area was used to store feed hay. The family would first drive over the high drive about you with their hay wagon. Once up there, they would pitch the hay down, either the feed hay in the area in front of you, or the bed hay in a separate area above.

**A.** Once the hay was stored, it could easily be pitched to the animals, through trap doors located in the walls above their hay troughs. Horses were located on the left, while cows were located on the right. After the animals were fed, their manure could easily disposed of through trap doors located in the floor below.

**8.** There are several displays in this area you should take some time to look at. First, take a chance to look at the large loom to your right. This was the loom that was used to weave all of the rugs found in the house. When the foundation first started cleaning out the barn, this loom was found in pieces. The whole thing had to be rebuilt, without any instructions to help.

**A.** Afterwards, check out the large map of Coös County. This map lists every homestead and business in the county, circa 1861.

**B.** Once you are finished looking at the map, glance over the list of names to your right. This is a list of every child in the Stewartstown school system, circa 1883. Some of these names may be familiar to you. You see, John Calvin Poore was the schoolteacher and superintendent for Stewartstown. That's how the family came about owning so many maps, books, and general school supplies.

**9.** Next, walk over to the display case that is inset in the wall. This is a display of the many patent medicines and cures available at the turn of the century. Most of these drugs did not have any medical proof to back them up, and as it turns out, most would be illegal these days. Many of these medicines were just simple mixtures of alcohol, and drugs like opium and cocaine. They didn't really cure the ailments, but did help the patients feel much, much better (at least for a little while...)

**A.** If you look towards the back left corner of this display, you may notice a strange looking object in a glass bottle. This object has a well, interesting story. This is a human finger. The story goes that when old Kenneth was in his teenage years, he had a Native American friend, whose name has been lost to history.

Anyway, one day, through some sort of freak accident, Kenneth's friend lost his finger. Now because they were such good friends ("blood brothers..."), Kenneth's friend gave him the finger. We're not sure if the finger was supposed to be buried with the friend, or if he was just supposed to keep it. Actually, we're not even sure if this story is true. One thing is for sure though, this finger sure gave the directors a scare when they were cleaning out Kenneth's barn...

**10.** On a lighter note, you should also take some time to look at the family tree that has been assembled in this area. Are you related to anyone on this list?

**A.** Feel free to spend as much time as you would like in this area, before proceeding to the third story of the barn.

**B.** Once you are done looking throughout the second story of the barn, please exit through the door, and walk down the ramp.

**C.** Now, walk towards your left, across the courtyard and up the large hill. Enter through the large barn doors. Welcome to the third story of the barn! Let's first look at the large wagon in front of you. This was the Poore's hay wagon, and you can guess what it was used for.

**D.** Next, take a chance to look at the displays to your left. First, check out the old area newspapers; then, the railway tickets. These tickets were souvenirs from the family's trip out west, around 1890. Afterwards, look at the almanacs to your right.

**F.** During the turn of the century, many drug companies would publish almanacs, and use them as advertising.

**11.** Now take a look at the large boxy object in the middle of the floor. This is a winnowing machine. It was used to separate the grain from the chaff. Here's how it

worked: First, the grain would be poured in through the funnel at the top. Then, the farmer would turn the crank, which would in turn, turn a fan in the back, and move several sieves in the front. The chaff would be blown away, and the grain would be collected in a bushel basket at the bottom.

**12.** Afterwards, glance over the old farming implements, both on the floor and in the straw storage area. These all were used by the family with horses. No tractors, no cars, no ATV's. Just horses or oxen.

**13.** When you are finished looking around here, walk towards the back of the barn, towards the display case. These are all toys, or school supplies that were used by the children in the family.

**A.** Spend as much time as you would like in this area. When you are finished, start walking out. But before you leave, take some time to stop by the small box located across from the hay wagon. These are transcribed Civil War letters, mostly between John Poore and his parents, and then fiancée Emma.

**Thank you very much for visiting the Poore Family Homestead Historic Farm Museum. We hope you enjoyed your visit, and will come back again. Feel free to walk any of our woodland trails now, both around the farm and across the road. We have around 100 acres of land that is open to you. Also, if you have a chance, walk across the street to check out our new environmental classroom.**

**Thank you again for visiting, and please come again!**