

ROOMING and BOARDING HOUSES, HOTELS OR HOSTELRIES

Food and shelter are two material demands that man cannot do without if he is to exist. From the beginning of time man and mate endeavored in some way to provide for both. An abode, no matter how humble, gave shelter from the elements - a little land gave of its riches in grains and vegetables, waters gave of their fish, woods gave of their animals for meat - food in short.

But what of the wayfaring strangers that have trod this earth of ours - where have they rested their bodies and filled their stomachs? Their home could be thousands of miles away, across seas, over mountains - for everyone has or has had a home somewhere. Provision for these wanderers goes back to ancient times, taverns, inns, or stables. Our story has to do with the trek of people through, and to, Maynard and what accommodations we have had for them.

The needs of travellers, passing through what is now Maynard in the early times was filled by Rice Tavern, at Voses Pond on Puffer Road. This was on the stagecoach route from Boston to Lancaster. It was closed in 1815 after being a tavern for a hundred years. With the erection of Ben Smith Bridge, the Great Road was opened to stagecoach travel, and Levi Smith, about 1816, ran the Thompson Place as a tavern and traveller's accommodation. No records that we have as of now tell us when this closed.

With the advent of Assabet Manufacturing Co. on the scene in Assabet Village, it wasn't too long that a tavern-hotel was erected right in the village for the accommodation of the local residents.

Peter Haley, in 1867, built the Glendale House on Summer Street where the present municipal parking lot is situated...the name coming from a blanket, 'Glendale Mills Blanket' that was manufactured by Assabet Manufacturing Co. We are lacking records in the 19th century except for an article in the Acton Patriot of August 8, 1875, telling us that the Maynard Brass Band serenaded

ROOMING and BOARDING HOUSES, HOTELS OR HOSTELRIES

landlord Mullen, of the Glendale House at his hostelry, and he reciprocated by treating the members to a fine repast.

John Desmond's name appears by 1899, and the name now is Maynard House (June 9, 1899). It finally burned down January 29, 1921.

The Maple House (location of our fire and police station) was built by G. Frank Cutting in the ^{1870's} 1880's. It operated for many years under his management. The last proprietor was William Campbell. The building was torn down in the 1920's.

The American House on Spring Lane was erected sometime in the 1880's or 90's. We have an ad for June 9, 1899, telling us that Julius Loewe and Son are the proprietors and also that they are wholesale dealers in liquors for medicinal purposes. This remained in business for many years. It was torn down June 8, 1933.

By 1901 there must have been other boarding and rooming houses in the center of town, but the first ad we come across, outside of the above-mentioned places, is dated August 23, 1901. It informs us that 'boarders wanted, just renovated rooms, airiest in town, am prepared to cater to the best class in town - corner of Glendale and Summer Streets, Thomas Farrell, Proprietor'.

The late James B. Farrell told us that the place was called Glendale House and previous to that Pompossiticut House. Jim's father died the following year so it must have closed then.

December 27, 1901 - Mrs. William Martin advertises 'table and board, Maine Street next to Harriman Laundry'.

With the tremendous growth of the American Woolen during these years it became imperative for the company to find lodging and food for its employees, so it built its own houses. Two boarding houses were built, part of which is now Buscemi's Market, 179 Main Street. This was May 9, 1902. One of these was

ROOMING and BOARDING HOUSES, HOTELS OR HOSTELRIES

called the Lakeview House, Mrs. Gibbons in charge; the other was the West End House. The Lakeview later was renamed Minto House, possibly after the Finnish proprietors. At this time also, American Woolen moved the original wool shop to 143-147 Main Street and made it a double rooming and boarding house. They were called the Middlesex and Assabet Houses. ?

In the same issue of the paper it is reported that over 100 applicants desire to be in charge of the boarding houses.

July 11, 1902 - Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bell are given management of one end of this double house. This building was purchased by the town September 14, 1934, to serve as our town house until the present municipal building was built in the early 60's.

Gutteridge's History tells us of Mrs. Hillis for many years operating the Central House, this originally being a livery stable. November 7, 1902 news note tells us the Central House¹⁵ being converted to a Finnish Boarding House. This building is still standing at 183 Main Street.

The Somerset Hotel was built by B. J. Coughlin at the corner of River and Main Street (Jake's Market now) in 1909, for we have an ad in the paper, April 15, 1910, calling our attention to it. His daughter, Mrs. Jeremiah Lynch tells us that her father around this time also bought The Maple House from the Cutting Estate, and later sold that to James Wall. He also allegedly sold the Somerset House to Harry Clarke around this time, for a newspaper note of April 30, 1911, tells us that townspeople question the propriety of one man having two licenses.

The Powder Mills had a large boarding and rooming house just on the town line on Powder Mill Road. A news article of October 22, 1909 informs us that it is being renovated with a smoking and pool room added.

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As late as September 30, 1927, there were five boarding houses according to the town census figures. With American Woolen falling on hard times and the movement of single people slowing up, and the residents of Maynard in the majority either owning homes or renting tenements, the hotels and rooming houses disappeared. Restaurants and diners took care of the dietary needs of the few that just had rooms.

It seems to this writer that Maynard, during the first two decades of this century, must have presented a picture of turmoil with so many strange faces moving in and out of its environs - no real stability.

I am indebted to the following for information on this paper:

Gutteridge's History of Maynard, Maynard News (all dates), Ralph Sheridan, Mrs. Jeremiah Lynch, and the late James B. Farrell (the last paper he will ever aid me with).

Read at the Maynard Historical Society Meeting of February, 1968--B.R. Koski