

FARMS AND RURAL RETREATS IN TOPSFIELD

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Presentation to Topsfield Historical Society

January 11, 2006

1. I have had the good fortune to work on several projects in Topsfield surrounding the history of the land – the farms and rural retreats. In the late 1990s Anne Forbes and I researched and wrote about these properties – the result was the documentation of about 50 properties (farms and estates of varying size). This was followed by the development of a National Register context statement and the listing of one district the River Road-Cross Street Historic District. Then last year the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was introduced to Topsfield and I and colleague Shary Page Berg were the consultants for this large Essex County project. Once again I was able to work with dedicated historical commission member, Elizabeth Mulholland and I want to publicly thank you for your willingness to share all your knowledge, time and just to make things happen! So with no further ado - tonight we will explore this wonderful land use pattern that has led to the preservation of so much of Topsfield's fine rural character. We'll hear about architects and landscape architects brought to Topsfield by out-of-towners to shape these country retreats and there will be constant reference to the Essex Agricultural Society established in 1818 and central to farms and rural retreats in Topsfield from that time forward.
2. Clearly preservation of your rural character is a guiding principle as we are reminded every time we enter Topsfield. This sign just begins to prepare us for the treats in store as we travel through your town.
3. The rural roads are important complementary features that lead to the rural retreats. Route One – the Newburyport Turnpike laid out as a toll road in 1804 and operated as a stage route cut a straight line through town – the most direct route possible connecting Newburyport to the north with Boston to the south. It retains its stone walls, its single travel lane in each direction and its topography as it traverses the hills and valleys of Topsfield. Perkins Row with its stone arch bridge is a narrow scenic road and of course River Road also is beloved for its stone walls, tree canopy and fine vistas across meadows.
4. And then there are many other rural views that are part of the farms and rural retreats story. The marshland of the Ipswich River or the cart path across the agricultural fields and leading down to the river. The natural landscape – the river, hills and valleys, are what has shaped the town. So let's begin by looking at some of the early dwellings that were surrounded by farmland and that retain much of their 17th, 18th and 19th century settings.
5. At the northwest corner of River Road and Prospect Street is the Zaccheus Gould House which started as a single cell structure (ca. 1670) and was enlarged by the addition of the

rooms on the left side of the now central chimney in ca. 1700. This house is at the center of Lake Village and surrounded by Lake farms.

6. The Lake farms comprised land on both sides of River Road. The late 17th to early 18th century Stanley-Lake House (so named for the Stanleys from whom the first Eleazer Lake had purchased land and a small building) and the Eleazer Lake House which was built in 1808, front on River Road. The fourth generation Lake built the 19th century house and farmed the family land and was succeeded by his son, Eleazer Lake, Jr. (1805-ca. 1868). This fifth generation Lake was a farmer and shoemaker who likely used the shoe shop at 95 River Road between the two houses. The area was known as Lake Village. We will return to the area for more on mid 19th century developments.
7. Over on the eastern side of town one of the earliest farms was that of Matthew Peabody who owned his Salem Road farm from 1736 to 1777. The house is likely to have preceded Matthew Peabody by many years as Samuel Boyd occupied a house at this location as early as 1720. One of Peabody's sons, John Peabody who owned ½ the house by 1768 and the rest following the death of his parents in 1777, was proprietor of 112 acres with his house. As the house passed to succeeding generations the land was divided and by the 1860s when it was sold to James Waters, only 12 acres accompanied the house and barn. The old barn burned and Waters had John H. Potter (local carpenter) construct a new barn in 1875 – hence the existing structure.
8. The first rural retreat in Topsfield was developed in the early 19th century when Captain Thomas Perkins (1758-1830) who lived in Salem inherited his father's farm in Topsfield and set out to build a high-style country residence. Although Perkins had been born in a small farmhouse (no longer extant) on his father's property and trained as a cordwainer, he had gone to Salem and shipped out on a privateer in ca. 1770. In the 1780s he met his future business partner, Joseph Peabody (1757-1844) aboard a ship. Together they amassed a sizeable fortune as merchants with a large fleet of sailing vessels that traveled between Salem and the West Indies. Upon the death of his father in 1807, Thomas Perkins found that his newly inherited property on Salem Road was a place in the country where he could pursue his farming interests, away from his permanent residence in Salem. He hired Topsfield carpenter-builder, Samuel Hood (1762-1843), to build his finely articulated Federal house (49 Salem Road). The Federal architecture in Salem clearly influenced Perkins' taste. (Besides the handsome exterior, some of the interior work demonstrated the strong influence of Samuel McIntire in the Adamesque embellishment of two mantels.) Perkins reportedly expanded his farm to incorporate progressive agricultural practices of the day, and was a founding member of the Essex Agricultural Society in 1818. His former business partner, Joseph Peabody, was pursuing similar interests in nearby Danvers where in 1814 he had purchased a country retreat (now known as Glen Magna) consisting of orchard and meadowland and a house large enough for two families. Although Perkins continued to live in Salem, in his later years he spent much of his time on his Topsfield farm, which upon his death passed to Perkins' nephew, **Asa Pingree, II** (1807-1869) a son of his sister, **Annar**

Perkins Pingree. (Asa's older brother, David Pingree, had followed his uncle into the shipping business, becoming an entrepreneur with an international reputation and was the principal heir of Perkins' shipping business.)

9. In 1836, Pingree constructed the Greek Revival, side-gabled, farmhouse for his mother next door at 45 Salem Road. Asa made other improvements to the property, but the only extant outbuilding constructed during his proprietorship is the unique stone stable/carriage house situated just southeast of what now was referred to as the "Pingree mansion". Constructed of fieldstone from Crooked Pond in Boxford, the 1850 stable replaced a chaise house that was destroyed by fire the year before. At the height of Asa Pingree's farming career he held nearly 150 acres and of course plenty of livestock such as a pair of oxen, five swine and several dairy cows from which he produced butter. He owned orchards and planted his fields with oats, potatoes, and hay. Unlike his uncle from whom he inherited this property, Asa Pingree made the farm his primary residence. He was a highly influential resident of Topsfield and one of its wealthiest citizens by the 1850s. He served as Selectman in the 1840s, was a founder of the new Methodist church which broke away from the original Congregational church, and was a founder of the Danvers & Georgetown Railroad which opened in 1854. In addition, he was an active member of the Essex Agricultural Society.
10. During his ownership, Asa Pingree expanded the farm land holdings to include the broad meadow across Salem Road from the farmstead, a piece of land fondly remembered in the twentieth century as "Sledding Hill" where locals recall sliding down to the Ipswich River in snowy winters. He also added large sweeps of land on the east side of the Newburyport Turnpike known as "Pingree's Hill" and meadows southwest of the farmstead bordering on Hill Street that eventually became part of Meredith Farm on Cross Street. Upon his death in 1869 Asa Pingree left the Salem Road farm and all the related land holdings to his nephew, **David Pingree II**, son of his brother, David. Like his great-uncle, Thomas Perkins, the new proprietor made his primary residence in Salem while carrying on extensive progressive farming operations on his Topsfield farm. He was a longtime member of the Essex Agricultural Society and won several prizes at the annual fair in the early 1900s in plowing and farm horse categories. Two buildings remain from David Pingree II's ownership, the late nineteenth century carriage house next to the Annar Pingree House and the large New England barn constructed in ca. 1907-1908. When David Pingree, II died in 1932, after more than sixty years as owner of the Salem Road farm, it passed to his grand-nephew, **David Pingree Wheatland** (b. 1898) who owned it into the 1980s. Although now reduced in size, the property is still in agricultural use with meadows that are hayed, and until most recently sheep housed in the barn grazing on some of the remaining pastureland.
11. In 1821 Benjamin Crowninshield (1772-1851), one of the four powerful Crowninshield brothers, of the family firm which owned the second-largest fleet in Salem, purchased the old Esty Farm that straddled the Newburyport Turnpike. Like his neighbor, Thomas Perkins, Crowninshield transformed the old colonial farm into a stylish and comfortable country seat. With the assistance of a resident farm manager, he turned his nearly two-hundred-acre

Topsfield farm into a rural showplace on the European model, with a main house approached by an avenue of planted firs and maples and surrounded by ornamental trees and gardens. While the Topsfield property at 116 Boston Street was truly a retreat from city life, its substantial working farm with pedigreed cattle, specimen crops and orchards of fruit trees also supplied the tables of the Crowninshield mansion in Salem. For a short period of time in the 1850s the farm was known as the Boyden Stock Farm with horses, cattle and over 50 pedigreed Suffolk pigs. Next owner was Thomas Wentworth Peirce (1818-1885) who first used his Newburyport Turnpike farm as a country retreat while living in Boston. A shipping magnate who had begun his career in New Hampshire and had moved his mercantile house, Peirce and Bacon, to Boston in 1843, he later increased his considerable fortune by investing in railroads. His first wife died in 1862, after which he apparently lived in Topsfield full time, supervising the farming activities and participating in the local agricultural fairs. By the 1870s he had remarried, and having invested heavily in southwestern railroads, maintained residences in both Topsfield and San Antonio, Texas. In 1872 he hired well-known local carpenter, Jacob Foster, to transform his Topsfield house into a three-story Second Empire mansion and to build a new stable. In addition to the enlarged country mansion and stable, the transformation of the old Crowninshield country retreat to an up-to-date gentleman's farm of the late 19th century, complete with model dairy, involved the construction of a large cluster of specialized outbuildings. Based on professional landscape plans by the eminent landscape designer and engineer, Ernest Bowditch, the designed landscape around the main house included picturesque walks, ornamental shrubs and trees, and formal gardens. At the same time, state-of-the-art drainage systems were installed on various parts of the property. From 1873 until his death in 1885, Col. Peirce also leased the Essex Agricultural Society's Treadwell Farm, located just north of his property, where he expanded his experimental farming.

12. The 1910 layout shows that Peirce's elaborate development had been maintained at his rural retreat.
13. On a farmstead across the Turnpike from his house Col. Peirce built what is reputed to have been the largest cow barn in Essex County, along with at least two smaller barns, an ice house, a blacksmith shop, and a manager's/boarding house. In 1880 the manager's house (111 Boston Street) was occupied by Peirce's farmer and his family, twelve farmhands, a housekeeper and an Irish-born gardener. Today, of the farmstead on the east side of Boston Street, the farmhouse, some stone walls, and the foundations of the outbuildings are all that remain.
14. Back to Lake Village: From the 1830s, Eleazer Lake Jr. (who lived at 93 River Road) and his brothers, Joel and William, ran a successful nursery business known as Topsfield Nurseries. Hundreds of varieties of apple, cherry, peach, pear and plum trees covered Lake Hill that rose behind the Lake houses on River Road extending along much of the length of Prospect Street. Ornamental and fruit trees were sold on Exchange Street in Boston and locally as well as through catalogues. Holdings of 1850 demonstrate the wide variety and large

quantity of plant material. Nursery stock included 700 apple trees on seven acres, with six varieties of winter apple trees (Northern Spy, Lady Sweeting, Baldwin, Greening, Roxbury Russett, and Danvers Winter Sweet), and eleven varieties of fall apple trees; the nursery exhibited 102 varieties of fruit at the Essex Agricultural Society fair and throughout the 1850s and 1860s they won many prizes in fruit and other nursery categories. Also in the 1850s, the Topsfield Nurseries began to raise evergreen trees as interest in ornamental landscaping was taking root. In the 1860s the next generation, **Charles H. Lake** son of Eleazer Lake Jr. (b. 1839 at 93 River Road) took over the Topsfield Nurseries business, and in 1866 built his Italianate dwelling at 49 Prospect Street, at the top of Lake Hill. Well-known local housewright, John H. Potter constructed the dwelling to go with a barn (no longer extant) that he had built on the property the year before. Orchards covered the hill and extended down to River Road and across on the south side of the road. At the same time, Charles's brother, Henry E. Lake (1836-1890) carried on farming and orcharding at the family homestead (93 River Road) into the 1880s. He had 200 apple trees in his orchard, grew crops of potatoes and corn, and raised a few cows and pigs – enough to accommodate the family and send produce to market. This property on Prospect Street became a rural retreat in the 1870s when Charles Lake sold the property to **Richard Price** (1841-1886) and **Octavius B. Shreve**, both of Salem. They “improved” the house and grounds into a lavish country estate which they named “Four Winds”. (Shreve was a physician in Salem and seemed to be unconnected with the property by 1880 when the household census showed Price and his family plus six servants living here in Topsfield. Richard Price died at the young age of 45 years in 1886, but his wife and daughters continued to spend summers on their Topsfield estate for many years. Mary E. Price, Richard's wife, died in 1924 and left the property to their three daughters who continued to use it as a summer retreat. Beginning in 1926, hired help lived in a cottage on the estate, which is no longer extant. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the property was slowly reduced in size from the 60 acres that Price had purchased in the 1870s to only six acres with the Italianate house atop the hill when it was sold to Eunice and Curtis Campbell in 1945.)

15. An example of a newcomer building an estate on a smaller parcel was **Percy Chase**, a Boston banker, who built his rural retreat at 58 Prospect Street in 1899. Mr. Chase and his wife who lived in Brookline, purchased a nine-acre parcel on which they built their house in 1899 and a companion stable in 1902. The Chases also owned a 22-acre pasture adjoining the house parcel on the east and fronting on River Road. Although the architect of the Shingle Style cottage is unknown, the style and elaboration represented popular trends of the day. Chase and his family were summers residents. In 1928 John L. Saltonstall, who by then had established an estate at 68 River Road described below, purchased this property to add to his large land holdings on River Road and in fact lived here after selling his River Road estate in the 1940s which we'll discuss soon.
16. Two of the largest country estates that survive today were established in 1898 and 1899. Bradley Webster Palmer (1866-1946) purchased the old Lamson farm at the east edge of town and turned it into a 3000-acre rural retreat on Asbury Street. His estate was rivaled only

by that of another new arrival, Thomas Emerson Proctor (1873-1949), who settled on Perkins Row. Both Proctor and Palmer hailed from Boston. Both had graduated from Harvard in the 1880s and remained bachelors, eventually retiring to Topsfield, where they lived until their deaths; Palmer in 1946 and Proctor in 1949. Bradley Palmer was a founding partner of the noted Boston law firm, Palmer and Dodge. Thomas Proctor dabbled in business and was the beneficiary of his father's amassed fortune from the leather business. In the 20th century, these two gentlemen alone were largely responsible for the preservation of both vast areas of land and many historic structures in both Topsfield and Ipswich. Many of these turn-of-the-century newcomers participated in farming and in the development of crops, horticulture, and livestock, with contributions to the EAS and entries in the yearly Agricultural Fair. These two gentlemen were no exception and both joined the Society immediately upon establishing themselves in Topsfield, and as early as 1899 Proctor won first prizes for his Berkshire boar and his Berkshire cow. Throughout the early 1900s he continued to win prizes for his Jersey cows, plowing teams, potatoes and other crops.

17. Proctor's estate, which began with his 1898 purchase of the Dudley Bradstreet farm on Perkins Row, and included subsequent purchases of surrounding lands such as Dr. Henry Sears Estate in 1901, ultimately covered about 4000 acres. A mansion house was farther along on Perkins Row and the footprints of many of his holdings can be seen on these 1910 atlas pages.
18. For some time at the turn of the century Proctor lived in this mid to late 18th century Bradstreet farmhouse which had been the main farmhouse of the Bradstreet family here for nearly 140 years. Proctor and his mother moved here while he was amassing his surrounding landholdings and adding to this property so that by 1908 there were 12 outbuildings on this property alone.
19. Both Thomas Proctor and Bradley Palmer invested vast sums of money in indigenous and imported ornamental plant material. Thomas Proctor set a goal to plant a specimen of every hardy North American tree on his estate, where his arboretum and rockery gained wide recognition. (the Rockery was designed by Japanese landscape architect Shintare Anamete and glacial remnants were brought here from Newbury and Rowley. Following the advice of Charles Sprague Sargent, he searched in the Far East for exotic plant varieties to add to his collection. And in the Rockery alone he planted Douglas fir, Korea's mugho, dwarf Alberta spruce, Japanese andronedas, and cork trees. Over the years, he maintained a network of carriage trails on his estate which were open to the public, so that all who wished could enjoy these landscape features. It is interesting to note that Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum also made frequent trips to Glen Magna where he advised William Endicott on plantings at the Peabody-Endicott Farm there.
20. Now as noted before Bradley Palmer came to Topsfield at about the same time and also bought a farm – the old Lamson property of which only the farmhouse remains. From the 1910 atlas we can see Palmers early laying out of his estate which was modified throughout

his more than 40 years here. A major change was in 1925 when he shifted or actually relocated Asbury Street by building the bridge over the Ipswich River and carrying the road away from his property. The new entrance gates – at about the location of the old road – were erected at this same time.

21. The Lamson House which now is vacant and boarded up was on the old road. It is reported to have at its core an early Lamson structure from the late 17th century that was added to a number of times to become this Georgian house and former farmstead.
22. Palmer's mansion was constructed in 1902 – much from local stone of the fences and walls on the property and along old Asbury Street – in a Craftsman style with English Revival influence. The architect was Charles K. Cummings (remember that name – we'll see more evidence of his work). The siting of the house on top of a hill overlooking the Ipswich River and at the end of a winding driveway employed important landscape and architectural tenets of the day. The house was organized in a U-shape and had many fine details in oak and cherry finish, stained glass, tiled floors and fireplaces.
23. Palmer took the park-like approach as evidenced by a letter from him in 1905 which asked for a “couple of carloads of rhododendron as an experiment”. Many of his bills of sale from nurseries throughout New England show the large quantities and varieties of plant material that he was adding to his Topsfield estate. He also communicated with nurseries in Scotland where he traveled and recruited a head gardener, William Keith of Aberdeen.
24. Topsfield also continued to draw new wealthy families from Boston, Salem, Lynn and other north shore cities in the early 1900s. Most of them purchased working farms and converted them to summer retreats with a farming component that was not only maintained, but often expanded. William Niles of Lynn, for instance, purchased and remodeled part of the Towne farm at 279 High Street in 1904. He moved the house up on to the top of the hill and remodeled it in the Colonial Revival Style. North of the house was planted a colonial style perennial garden with sundial as a focal point and a low picket fence. Now Valley View Farm.
25. Across the street the Towne Farm was converted to a 1920s agricultural estate by Malden resident, Ichabod F. Atwood, who with his wife established their country seat, which they called “Newtowne Farm ” at 279 High Street. In the process, they expanded the old farm to 130 acres. Although the Atwoods were summer residents, they raised cows, sheep, and horses and joined the Essex Agricultural Society by 1927. A striking feature here was the addition of this outdoor room – or garden lot on the northwest side of the house – enclosed by a high stone wall and featuring a stone well structure at the middle. Remnants of the orchard and arrangement of the farm buildings also are of note.
26. Here we see the barns of these two farms which used to be one – opposite one another.

27. At 29 Cross Street was the farm of **Daniel Bixby**, which took on its country retreat characteristics in the twentieth century, but only after being firmly established as prime farmland on the south side of the Ipswich River. The younger Daniel Bixby (1751-1825) lived on the Cross Street farm at the time of the American Revolution and reported that he was in the fields when he learned about the outbreak of the war. He left immediately for Lexington and subsequently supplied the Continental Army with beef from the farm. Bixby added to his farm so that by the early 1800s he owned all of the land bordering on Cross Street between Rowley Bridge Street and Hill Street. He willed his farm to the town as the "Donation Farm", the income from which would help to support the Congregational ministers of Topsfield. This arrangement continued to 1871, when the property was sold to Isaac A. Morgan (1808-1878), who renamed the Donation Farm River Dale Ranche. Although this Cross Street farm was to become a rural retreat in the twentieth century, it retained its significant farming tradition, which was enhanced by the next owner, **J. Morris Meredith** (1850-1928). This Boston realtor, who started the well-known firm of Meredith & Grew in 1891, purchased the farm in 1899. Meredith maintained livestock on his farm including several horses, a small herd of up to 16 cows, several pigs and a flock of chickens. He was a member of the Essex Agricultural Society.
28. In 1900 J. Morris Meredith, built his Arts and Crafts house behind the farming complex. While Meredith called Topsfield his permanent home from 1902 to 1920, he clearly was among the class of those who sought out retreats in Topsfield. He had begun his career with some high profile real estate transactions at an early age. In 1875 he formed the Copley Trust with a number of investors, purchased the old Museum of Fine Arts building and eventually built the Copley Hotel. He also was the broker for the sale of the Amos Lawrence estate in Newton's Chestnut Hill area to Boston College. In 1891, when Meredith established his firm, Meredith & Grew, with partner Edward Wigglesworth Grew, he expanded the business to real estate management and the formation of trusts to hold real estate. It is interesting to note that although Meredith called Topsfield his primary residence, he must have retained his Boston home at 66 Beacon Street, as he returned there when he sold the farm in ca. 1920 to his nephew. **This was Edward Wigglesworth**, who lived in Boston on Chestnut Street and was the director of the Boston Society of Natural History Museum (now the Museum of Science). Wigglesworth took an avid interest in the farming and developed a nationally recognized Guernsey herd. Under his proprietorship most of the outbuildings of the farmstead complex were constructed, including the icehouse, the garage, the small cow barn and attached wood stave silo. He, like many of his rural retreat colleagues, was a member of the Essex Agricultural Society of which he became president in 1928. Mr. Wigglesworth continued to call Meredith Farm his summer residence until 1944. The tradition of raising fine specimen cattle at Meredith Farm was perpetuated by the mid-twentieth century owners, **David and Irma Lampert**, who purchased the farm in 1946. They developed a breeding business with their foremost Ayrshire herd and in 1950 received the International Grand Champion Cow Award for Talisman Emerald's son Trinket. By the late 1950s, under the Lamberts the farm had grown to 250 acres, and supported a world-renowned herd of 140 Meredith Ayrshires.

29. While farming was an important component of many country seats, some new owners came to Topsfield to establish rural retreats that became showcase properties that did not include farming. Such was the case with the large summer cottage built for the Percy Chases of Boston on Prospect Street mentioned before. Other examples on Salem Road: In 1905 Malden residents Arthur H. Wellman and his wife purchased farmland to construct a country estate designed by Stickney & Austin. Wellman was an attorney in Boston in his own firm, Wellman & Wellman, and also served in the Massachusetts Legislature representing Malden in the early 1900s. In 1910 James M. Marsh of Lynn, owner of the Goodwill Soap Company, built his architect-designed estate next to the Wellmans' also on Salem Road. Like several other early-20th century owners, Marsh and his family had summered in Topsfield for a few years before purchasing property. When the time came to develop their own country seat, the Marshes purchased land from David Pingree II, then owner of the Perkins-Pingree Farm. Each of these summer estates were carefully sited with fine views over meadows and well planted with rhododendrons, mountain laurel, magnolias and flower borders.
30. And in 1905 George and Annie B. Shattuck of Salem purchased an old farm and subsequently hired architect William G. Rantoul to transform it into a gentlemen's farm at 51 Wenham Road. They greatly expanded it in 1907, and operated a renowned dairy farm here for many years. The large gambrel roofed, stuccoed country house was their summer residence. Shattuck died at an early age in 1915 and his wife and daughter operated the dairy farm until the 1940s. Annie, daughter Jane, and one son became permanent residents of Topsfield in 1934.
31. The garden behind the house is designed as a two-level grassed terrace with a low fieldstone retaining wall. A perennial garden is at the base of the wall as are a bench and birdbath. The playhouse (later studio) appears to have been reconstructed.
32. One of the most substantial country retreats was established for **Margaret Cummings** (1876-1965) of Boston in 1909. Miss Cummings purchased a parcel of land at 82 River Road that had been part of the Lake property and on which a Lake family cemetery remains. She had her architect brother, Charles Kimball Cummings (1870-1955), design her estate, which included the house and a garage in the Tudor Revival style as well as the small brick pump house located down at the end of a meadow near the Lake Cemetery. Like most of the rural estates in this part of Topsfield, which were oriented to the Ipswich River, the layout took advantage of a distant view of the river from the brick terrace at the rear of the house. For his sister's country property, Charles Cummings recommended a domestic scale and a picturesque treatment rather than the more formal and monumental styles that were popular at the time. This is evident in the final design of the buildings as well as in the treatment of the grounds. Although Miss Cummings continued to live in Boston into the 1930s, she was intimately connected to the Topsfield community. She was distinguished as the first woman member of the Essex Agricultural Society, and participated in its events. She maintained gardens, crops and orchards on her Topsfield estate which she named "Innisfree," possibly

after the Innisfree of William Butler Yeats' well known poem the "Lake Isle of Innisfree," which romanticizes the notion of creating an idyllic place. Although the summer social registers account for her winter residence as 300 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston into the 1930s, Miss Cummings became a registered voter in Topsfield beginning in 1927.

33. Almost immediately after construction of the buildings Miss Cummings' landscape architect, Arthur Shurcliff (1870-1957) developed a landscape plan for the estate. The outline of the perennial garden and the garden pavilion are still extant conveying a sense of the many different aspects of estate landscaping. Miss Cummings continued to add to her estate with the construction in 1922 of the "gardener's cottage"--so called by her brother, who designed the bungalow cottage. Eventually it became the house of Miss Cummings' secretary, Margaret Fridden, who lived here until 1967.
34. The terraced steps leading from the terrace down towards the river are bordered by remnants of orchards and at the bottom of the hill is the Lake Cemetery and the small brick pump house designed by Cummings.
35. Also on the estate was a tea house constructed in 1927 and augmented in 1929 by a sunken garden. The interior of the diminutive garden house was embellished with raised-field paneling and Delft tiles, no doubt to romanticize the colonial style. It was demolished in 1997. The sunken garden designed by Robert Nathan Cram of Boston remains with stone wall, iron filigree gate, and general outline of the flower beds.
36. James Duncan Phillips (1876-1954) and his wife, Nannie Borden Phillips (d. 1963), of Salem and Boston had summered in Topsfield at the new Pingree mansion on Hill Street for several summers before purchasing over 100 acres of farmland across the street. Here, at 120 Hill Street, they built their country seat in 1911 and 1912. Phillips descended from another prominent Salem family who also had made fortunes in the shipping business. An 1897 graduate of Harvard, he was a Vice President at Houghton Mifflin publishing company, and a renowned historian who wrote articles for the New England Quarterly and the Essex Institute's Historical Collections. While the Phillips retained residences in Salem and Boston, they developed Donibristle Farm as a model dairy farm and prominent rural retreat. They hired prominent Boston-based architectural firm, Putnam & Allen, to design their large summer mansion as well as other buildings on the 100-acre estate. Like the "gentleman farmers" before him, Phillips was a member of the Essex Agricultural Society and participated in the annual agricultural fairs.
37. The outbuildings too were part of the 1911 to 1912 construction – a barn for 6 horses, several cows and a hayloft; a garage for 2 cars, a "tenement for the chauffeur's occupancy; an icehouse. In 1915 a piggery was added and an addition to the barn in 1918.
38. And a small summer house or tea house in a garden marked by low brick gates was situated below the high wall surrounding the terrace at the rear of the house.

39. One of the largest in size and grandest in taste of Topsfield's estates was the twentieth century country home of **John L. Saltonstall** (1878-1959) at 68 River Road. Early use of the property was by the Lake family who farmed most of the land along River Road in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and built several houses. In 1920, Mr. Saltonstall of Beverly purchased what was known as the Webster Estate. John Saltonstall, a Harvard graduate of the Class of 1900, was the son of William Gurdon Saltonstall and Josephine Rose Lee Saltonstall, and first cousin of well-known Massachusetts governor, Leverett Saltonstall. (Both of John Saltonstall's parents had descended from old aristocratic families: his father, a direct descendant of the 1630 settlers of Watertown, and his mother, the daughter of the founder of the pre-eminent banking firm of Lee Higginson and Co. in 1848.) (John Saltonstall was a successful stockbroker from 1903 to 1935, served in the Navy during World War I, worked for the War Trade Board in Washington, D. C., and while living in Beverly served on the City Council and was the State Representative to the General Court in 1911-1912.) The farm that Saltonstall purchased included several nearby farms on the north side of the Ipswich River. The main property had the ca. 1760 Lake-Bradstreet cottage with several outbuildings clustered around it on and near the site that he chose for his new mansion. Saltonstall relocated the cottage to its present site in front of the western wing of the main house and had other buildings moved or removed in preparation for the construction of Saltonstall's Georgian Revival country house designed by Philip Richardson of Richardson, Barott & Richardson, a Boston architectural firm. The architect had designed a number of houses in Chestnut Hill near Saltonstall's maternal home and on Beacon Hill in Boston. The setting of his new farm overlooking the Ipswich River reminded Saltonstall of Virginia's estates overlooking the James River, hence the design of his large rural retreat in brick with a central block and flanking pavilions. Interior spaces were enhanced with features preserved from the Saltonstall-Howe House which had been built for Dr. Nathaniel Saltonstall on Merrimack Street in Haverhill in the late eighteenth century. After having been moved locally to Lake Saltonstall, also in Haverhill, in 1870, it became part of the Winnekenni Terrace development which was laid out in 1906. The Saltonstall-Howe House was demolished in 1919 and John Saltonstall was able to reuse the grand staircase and paneling in his new dining room and drawing room at his new Topsfield estate.
40. The landscape architect for Saltonstall's rural retreat was Harold Hill Blossom, who had worked in the Brookline office of the Olmsted Brothers for twelve years on such illustrious projects as the San Diego and the Seattle Expositions. In 1919 Blossom opened his own landscape architecture practice to advance his considerable knowledge of horticulture and ecology. Together, Saltonstall's two designers, Philip Richardson and Harold Blossom, turned the rural agrarian property, with its cluster of small wood frame buildings arranged near the eighteenth-century farmhouse, into an estate displaying a fine blend of a formalistic approach to the house and its immediate surroundings and a pastoral approach to the overall setting. Saltonstall's development of this estate in effect promoted principles of preservation, whether intentional or not. As noted above, he preserved the ca. 1760 Lake-Bradstreet cottage rather than demolishing it, and kept it as a main feature of the setting for

his 1920s mansion. Other buildings were relocated and reused. The reuse of interior features of the Haverhill ancestral Saltonstall-Howe House in the new Georgian Revival mansion attested to Saltonstall's intentional interest in preserving the past. Also, Saltonstall continued to assemble his large estate by acquiring additional surrounding farmland: 1923 the John Balch property, (9 River Road); 1928 the Percy Chase House on Prospect Street including the 22-acre pasture between his property on the north side of River Road and Prospect Street. He spent most summers and many winter weekends at their Topsfield retreat, which they called "Huntwicke". During their winter visits from their permanent residence at 191 Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, they stayed in the Lake-Bradstreet cottage rather than in the large mansion.

41. Saltonstall's appointed estate was well received, according to the magazine, *Architectural Record*, which in its November 1924 issue published Photographs and reviewed the architecture with the following praise: ".....the perfect relation between central block and the subordinate wings; the excellent fenestration and the beautiful detail have produced not only a skillful piece of design, but a house of genuine charm without affectation.....it is a byproduct of good architecture and good taste interacting upon each other." Other publications also applauded the design of Saltonstall's estate. *House Beautiful* in June 1925 published an article titled "A Modern Country House after the Southern Colonial Style," with Photographs showing the whitewashed brick mansion and the hand carved wood ornamentation. (And the *Boston Evening Transcript* on June 30, 1923 showed Photographs of the house calling it "'Cold Roast Boston'" – A New House Two Centuries Old" noting that the plan is reminiscent of a Southern colonial building.) A small part of the landscape was featured in a 1926 *House Beautiful Gardening Manual* with an introductory chapter on garden design by Fletcher Steele. In a chapter on "Maintenance and Equipment" the Saltonstall terraced garden is shown with apple and pear trees espaliered to the garden wall.
42. In 1940, the Saltonstall Estate was sold to **Frederick R. Sears, 3rd** (1855-ca. 1946) of Palm Beach, Florida, and Mr. Saltonstall moved to the Prospect Street property. In 1948 the Sears estate was sold to his cousin **William Appleton Coolidge** (1901-1992). Mr. Coolidge was a 1924 graduate of Harvard, served in the Navy during World War II, and worked as a stockbroker, lawyer and later in business. He hailed from an aristocratic family much like Saltonstall. Coolidge was a direct descendant of a first settler at Watertown, John Coolidge, was directly related to President Thomas Jefferson. Coolidge was a large contributor to Topsfield institutions and at one period served on the local Finance Committee. He was a substantial donor to the Essex Agricultural Society, and financed the construction of Coolidge Hall at the Fair Grounds in 1981, donated a corner of his land for the construction of the Topsfield Episcopal Church, and made major donations to the Topsfield Historical Society. He also continued the tradition of preservation of the rural character of this unique area by purchasing the adjacent Cummings Estate (82 River Road) in the late 1960s and Meredith Farm (29 and 41 Cross Street) in the 1970s, thus joining under common ownership nearly all of the land bordered by River Road on the north, Cross Street on the south, Salem Road and Hill Street on the east and Rowley Bridge Street on the west. Through the 1960s

and the 1970s Coolidge also continued the traditions of farming of this land and conducted experimental farming projects, particularly at Meredith Farm. In 1984 Coolidge deeded Meredith Farm to MIT granting life tenancy to the Lamperts. Upon his death in 1992 the rest of Mr. Coolidge's property including the River Road estates was bequeathed to MIT, which sold all of these former Coolidge properties in 2000. He is buried in the Lake Cemetery.

43. The EAS, which continued to hold its annual agricultural fairs at various locations throughout Essex County and to maintain its experimental Treadwell Farm in Topsfield, determined to develop the farm into a permanent location for the annual fair. The decision was based on concern for the viability of the Treadwell Farm, on the increasingly difficult yearly struggle to find a large enough site with appropriate buildings for the fair, (which had grown substantially over the years,) and on the belief that permanent buildings would enhance the fair's quality and success. Still known as the Cattle Show and Fair, (later to become the Topsfield Fair), the first annual fair at the permanent location was held at the Treadwell Farm in Topsfield in 1910.