

Then & Now - Upper Common

Town Hall Drive

Goodnow Memorial Building

The Princeton Congregational Church and carriage sheds were built in 1838 and were located at the top of the common just below a rock ledge. Prior to that, Princeton's first two Town Halls were located up Mountain Rd opposite the Meeting House Cemetery. Building the new church, in this more moderate climate, created a newly developed center of town, with Boylston Hall following in 1842. Unfortunately in 1883, the Boylston Hall and a nearby out building burned to the ground and the fire could be seen from as far away as Worcester.

This unfortunate occurrence gave Mr. Edward A. Goodnow the opportunity to make the following proposal: "If the town would have the church and horse sheds moved over to the site of the recently burned town-hall and



Congregational Church on the Common & Boylston Hall to the Right

purchase the land behind the church, he would give \$40,000 (\$787,166.41 in today's current money) toward building a new library with reading room, and two school classrooms."

Additionally, he donated \$5,000 to go toward the purchase of books and equipment. A large fireproof vault for the preservation of town records was built in the reading room.

The construction was completed in 1884. An outstanding architectural feature is the clock tower with words inscribed, Goodnow Memorial Building, A.D.1883. Above the inscription is a Howard tower clock, which strikes the hours, on a one thousand pound Meneely bell. The bell is inscribed "Goodnow Memorial Building - Knowledge is Power". Terms of the gift stipulated that the building would serve jointly as library and public school until the library required additional space. Including the library and reading

room, the building also contained two sizable schoolrooms with separate entrances for boys and girls in grades 1-12. The school was closed in 1906, when the Center School opened.. (While moving the church, it also was rotated 90 degrees.) ¹. Good thing there was no power lines or indoor plumbing with which to contend. [writer's comment]
Mr. Goodnow grew up in Princeton and made his fortune in Worcester in the shoe and hat industry and later as the president of the First National Bank for 28 years.

1. History of Princeton by Francis E. Blake – Vol #1 – pages 300 - 301

Bagg Hall



Mr. Goodnow also gave \$3,000 toward building Princeton a town hall, which was named Bagg Hall, after the maiden name of his first 2 wives the Bagg sisters (Harriet and Mary) and his son Henry by his second wife, who all passed away at a very young age. ¹.

His third wife, Catherine, passed away after marriage of 25 years,

while his fourth wife, Sarah West, out lived him.

From March of 1886 until the 1970's Bagg Hall has been used for town meetings, dances, voting, elementary school graduations, celebrations, grange and 4H meetings, and other events. It currently serves as offices for town employees, but with current state/federal regulations the second floor cannot be used by the public without providing handicap access via an elevator.



Civil and Other War Plaques

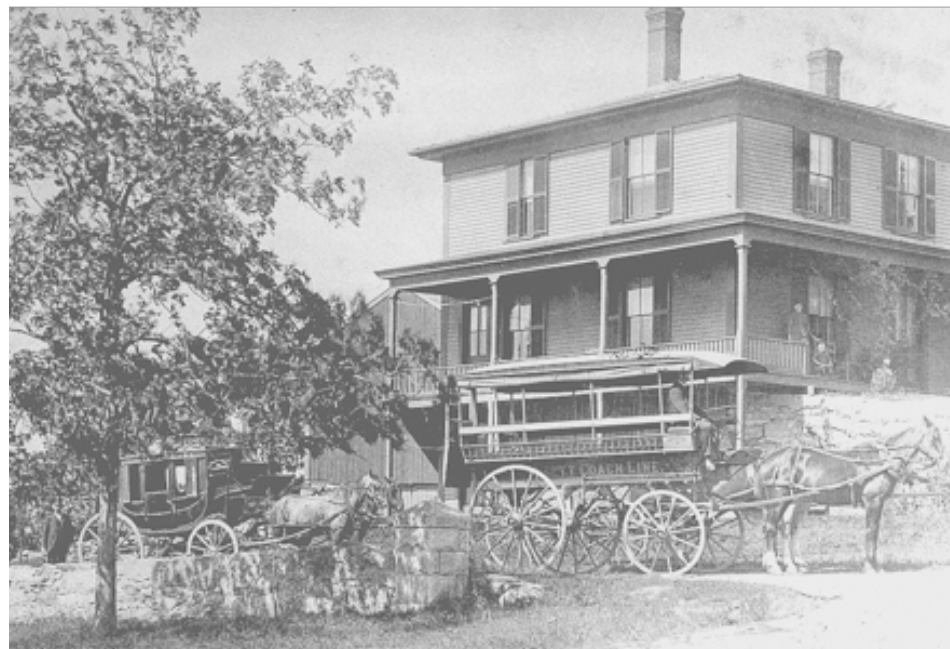
Just before entering Bagg Hall on either side of the doorway, there were 2 marble plaques listing the Civil War Roll Call of those Princeton residents that fought in that war. Inside the entrance, as you climb the stairs, you also find the Roll Calls for WWI and WWII participants.



Unfortunately, the marble plaques have deteriorated, broken, and been removed. Please explore and remember those Princetonite's that fought and died for our freedom.

P.C. Doolittle House & Company

During the time when Princeton was a summer resort attraction, late 1850's to the early



1920's, just behind the Goodnow Memorial Building, was located the Wachusett Coach Line. This coach line was run by P.C. Doolittle and provided service between the six major hotels, as well as the town's numerous boarding houses. With the building of the railroad through Princeton in 1871, his business peaked with the advent of nine trains stopping at the Depot on

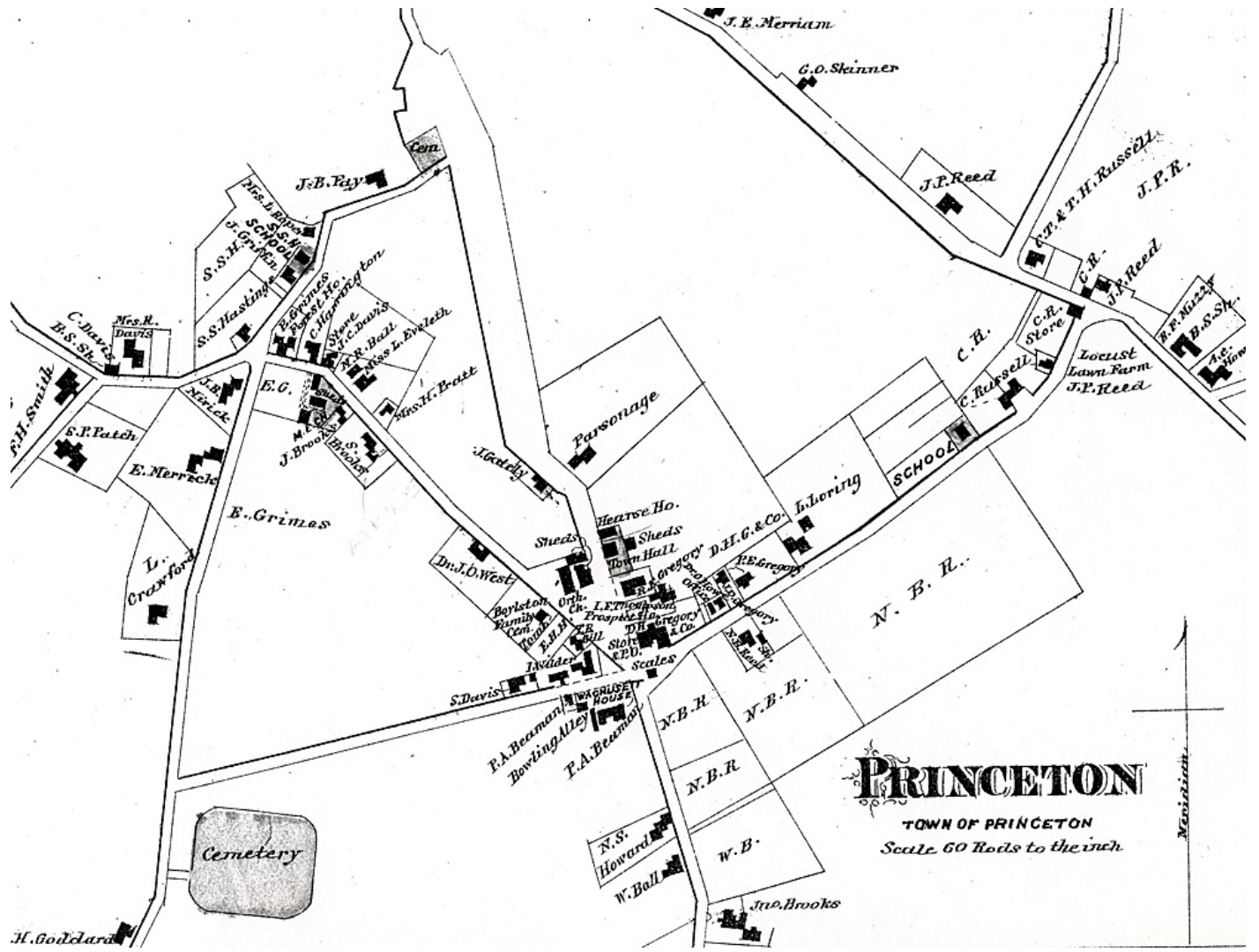
Hubbardston Road and Brooks Station each day. Today this home is a private residence.

Please visit princetonmahistory.org to learn more about Princeton's rich history.

Please feel free to write us, if you have any questions or information to offer at princetonmahistory@gmail.com







PRINCETON
TOWN OF PRINCETON
Scale 60 Rods to the inch

Meridian