

“Then & Now” – Fernside 162 Mountain Rd.

Historical Facts:

Fernside is considered the oldest vacation house in Worcester County and had served as such until 1989. The central section of the house was built in 1835 by Benjamin Harrington on the site of an earlier house built in 1771 by Joseph Eveleth. A subsequent owner, Wilkes Roper added the north and south wings and operated a boarding house for Harvard professors and students. These additions were made in 1870-1872. In 1885 F. A. Boyd leased the house and used it as a boarding house. It was during this period that the building was used as a tavern for some time and fell into disrepair.

Fernside Through The Years:

In 1890, the Working Girls' Club in Boston purchased this house (This Club was the first of its kind formed in 1886). The house was set up by donations from wealthy patrons to enable the working class women the opportunity for a summer vacation away from the city. The house was refurbished and kept in excellent condition for many years and was expertly and lovingly managed by Josephine Allen. The Vacation House received its last guest in 1989. Richard and Jocelyn Morrison, who have restored and opened Fernside in 1996 into a



bed, breakfast, and conference center, purchased it. In 2006 Mclean Hospital purchased it, and turned it into an Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center.

Architectural Description:

Fernside is a Georgian house finished in the federal style. The house is set on the east side of Little Wachusett Mountain and faces Mountain Road about two miles from the center of Princeton. The west side of the house facing Mountain Road is 2 1/2 stories and the east side is 3 1/2 stores and faces east with an expansive view of the Greater Boston area, some fifty miles away. On the east side of the house is a large piazza built in 1994-1995, which replaces an earlier similar structure. This clapboard house consists of three offset rectangular sections roughly in a north/south line. The north

and south sections are set back from the center section giving the appearances from the front of a T---shaped building and a U-shaped building from the back.



Fernside & Playhouse to the Left

The original house (center section) was built in 1835 as 2 stories (plus basement and attic) with four rooms per floor. The original house is on a large stone foundation with massive buttresses supporting the fireplaces. The north and south sections were built circa 1870. In 1890 the south section burnt and was quickly rebuilt. A hall with a curved archway in the main section runs west to east from the front to the piazza. There are Rumford Fireplaces in each of the four rooms of the main section. The playhouse is located approximately 150 feet north of the main house. It is a 2 1/2 story rectangular building similar in character to the main building. There are 4 bays on the west facing main façade and a front gabled roof. There is a large front entry porch on the south end of the building with a mansard roof. There is a small porch on the north end of the building and another small porch on the west side facing Mountain Road.

Fernside Interior:

The original house (center section) was built in 1835 as 2 stories (plus basement and attic) with four rooms per floor. The original house is on a large stone foundation with massive buttresses supporting the fireplaces. The north and south sections were built circa 1870. In 1890 the south section burnt and was quickly rebuilt. A hall with a curved archway in the main section runs west to east from the front to the piazza. There are Rumford Fireplaces in each of the four rooms of the main



Parlor With Library to the Left

section. The Playhouse is located approximately 150 feet north of the main house. It is a 2 1/2 story rectangular building similar in character to the main building. There are 4 bays on the west facing main façade and a front gabled roof. There is a large front entry porch on the south end of the building with a mansard roof. There is a small porch on the north end of the building and another small porch on the west side facing Mountain Road.

Fernside Advertisement:



Back Porch With View to Boston

“This house, formerly know as the "Princeton Vacation House for Working Girls," will open for the season on Saturday, July 1. It is conducted exclusively for the benefit of women wage earners, over seventeen years of age, and is in Princeton Mass., beautifully situated on the side of Mount Wachusett. The house is in perfect order, the table

ample, with fresh vegetables daily from the garden. The mountain can be ascended in two hours from the house. Each person is expected to aid in the care of her bedroom and to do her share of the table work. The price for board is \$4.00 a week, and the railroad fares \$1.90 for the round trip. Reduction is made



Summer Guests Getting Water For Their Rooms

sometimes for those greatly needing a change of air, but unable to pay the above prices. Each person is expected to remain two weeks. All board and railroad tickets must be obtained from the "Fernside Agent," and paid in advance. She will be at the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, No. 264 Boylston Street, every Tuesday and Friday evening, from 7 to 9 o'clock, beginning Tuesday June 13th. A deposit of fifty cents is required at the time of application; this will be deducted later from the regular board.

The parties, twenty-one in each, will leave every Saturday from South Station, and are



met at the Princeton station by the "Fernside" carriage. Applications should be made early, as the house accommodates but forty-two. All are requested to bring their clothing in bags, as transportation of trunks from the station is difficult. As there are no conveniences for personal laundry

work, it is well to bring a supply of underclothing to last during the stay."

Miss M. J. Allen, President

Other Resources [Can Be Found Here:](#)

- The Fernside Story
- Radcliffe Institute For Advanced Study Harvard University
 - (Enter in the Quick Search the key word Fernside)
- Fernside GOLDEN JUBILEE 1939

Please feel free to write us, if you have any questions or information to offer at

princetonmahistory@gmail.com

To learn more about Princeton's rich history, please visit:

<http://www.princetonmahistory.org>

Writers Comment:

Try to image, how a young single working woman might have felt in the late 1890's:

- Boarding a train from Boston to Worcester,
- Changing trains and heading to Princeton,
- Getting off the train at the Princeton Depot,
- Then getting into a buggy or hay wagon
- Traveling 3 miles over a dusty dirt Hubbardston Road,
- Then traveling 3 more miles up a dusty dirt Allen Hill Road onto Mountain Road, before arriving at Fernside?

