

Atkinson, New Hampshire

Historical and Cultural Profile

KEY FINDINGS:

- Atkinson has extensive historic and cultural resources which are well documented.
- Atkinson's Historical Society is heavily involved in efforts to educate the public about Atkinson's history.
- Atkinson is fortunate to have several active cultural organizations and popular community events that bring residents together and build a greater sense of community.
- Atkinson is part of the Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway and features many historic structures and landscapes that have been preserved over time.
- Atkinson has a significant number of remaining historic structures from many architectural eras. These include the forty sites identified along the Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway which show examples of Georgian style, Federal-style houses, Greek Revival style, the Colonial Revival style, and bungalow houses.
- Farms that were once central to Atkinson's land use pattern and identity have slowly disappeared, but remnants of the agricultural landscape can still be seen today.
- Atkinson has one property listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Atkinson Academy.
- Atkinson has one property listed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places: The Center School.

DATA SOURCES:

- Atkinson Historical Society Website
- New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR)
- National Register of Historic Places
- Atkinson 2015 Master Plan Update
- 1999 Atkinson Then and Now: 2nd Edition
- Old Stagecoach Scenic Byway Brochures
- Atkinson Local Organization Websites

INTRODUCTION

This profile identifies and describes Atkinson's many historical and cultural resources. This includes taking a look back at the indigenous peoples of the area, the first colonial settlers, how the community was incorporated as a town, and the significant landmarks and landscapes that remain today. Historic and cultural resources add to the unique character of the town and help to distinguish Atkinson from other New Hampshire communities. These resources include both physical resources (landscape features, buildings, and physical sites) as well as non-physical resources (organizations, programs, clubs, and community traditions).

ATKINSON'S HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The indigenous peoples known as the Pennacook Native Americans lived on the land now known as Atkinson before colonial settlement. The larger Haverhill, Massachusetts area was called the "Pentucket" during these early days. Unfortunately, many of the Pennacook tribe members were impacted by rising rates of illness, such as measles, and famine, which reduced their population significantly. Chief Passaconaway was fearful of more death and devastation affecting his people, so he led his remaining tribe to new homeland near Concord, New Hampshire. Beyond the Penacook Native Americans, many other tribes passed through what is now known as Atkinson leaving traces and artifacts. It is believed that the passing tribes may have stopped to rest at Big Oak, or at Indian Rock. These locations were known to have been stops along Native American tribe's way from their journey from Rhode Island to Canada. Additionally, many Native American artifacts have been found around Big Island Pond.

Early settlement in this area was centered around agriculture where farmers cultivated corn, wheat, potatoes, fruits, and livestock. The cultivation of potatoes and flax for the spinning of linen was introduced to the area in 1718 by a group of Scotch-Irish immigrants who eventually settled in Londonderry. These crops became the first two major marketable commodities of the area that helped to sustain Atkinson's economy through agricultural trade. The first settlers in Atkinson were Ben Richards of Rochester, John Dow of Haverhill, Nathaniel, Jonathan, and Edmund Page of Haverhill, MA. They became residents of "North Parish" located in the western portion of Haverhill. This land is now known as Plaistow and Atkinson. In 1740 the Massachusetts boundary was established and much of this "North Parish" area became part of southern New Hampshire. Atkinson's land as we know it today was once a part of Plaistow when Plaistow was established as a town in 1749. Atkinson was incorporated as its own official Town in 1767. The Town was named after Theodore Atkinson, a nephew of the former Provincial Governor of New Hampshire named Benning Wentworth.

During the first year of Atkinson's incorporation, town meetings were held in John Dow's home until 1768 when a meetinghouse was constructed on the north side of Main Street next to the Old Cemetery. In 1773, the Atkinson Cemetery was officially established and during the Revolution, at least three grist and mills had been constructed. The remains of the mills may be seen today on Shannon Road, West Side Drive, and Island Pond Roads. The old cemetery on Main Street still exists today. After the Revolution, many settlers experienced a regional upswing

in industry, education, transportation, and architecture. Textile mills and shoe factories were located in Haverhill, MA, and during this time, Atkinson was busy constructing new roads that were utilized by stagecoach. This led to a general increase in travel and blacksmiths and wheelwrights became in demand in Atkinson's economy. There was also a significant demand for education which led to the establishment of many schools, library associations, and colleges in the region. In 1787, Atkinson built the first Atkinson Academy. The construction of Atkinson Academy turned Atkinson from an agricultural town to an academy town and attracted many students to the area. Students lived in various farmhouses throughout the area, and many became teachers in Atkinson and neighboring towns.

Agriculture in Atkinson

With increased industrialization in the Haverhill-Atkinson area, this led to an even higher demand for transportation services. Turnpikes and canals were constructed and were shortly superseded by railroad networks. Access to these transportation systems benefited Atkinson due to its location and proximity for goods, resources, and trade. Some Atkinson residents began to work from home producing agricultural goods and turning out piece work for Haverhill factories. Access to the railroad system gave Atkinson settlers the opportunity to transport products easily. Agriculture was thriving in Atkinson and was creating a diverse range of occupations. Atkinson had the capacity to ship milk, butter, and cheese to markets in Boston and Haverhill, and by 1854 E.N. Greenough became the first local farmer with a milk run between Atkinson and Haverhill. However, the success of the agricultural industry would eventually face one of the most difficult periods of time due to farmers having to adapt to the regions changing needs as area residents began moving west during 1870 and for thirty years after. Farm abandonment in the east became more prevalent as the west produced cattle and wheat more cheaply. The railroad expansion also allowed for more people to move away. Fortunately, milk remained a demanded product of the Atkinson region, and would appeal to the markets of Boston and other large cities. As these cities became more industrialized and more densely populated, the demand for milk and other dairy products grew and the transition from the multi-purpose farm to the dairy farm had begun. Atkinson soon became the second ranking milk-producing town in Rockingham County by 1875, and local dairy farmers were selling 420,000 quarts of milk annually to Boston.

The overall decline of multi-purpose farming in Atkinson due to farm abandonment had a dramatic effect on the reforestation of the area. During the Civil War decade of 1860-1870, Atkinson had a significant amount of cultivated land and a decline in forest cover. However, as people began to abandon their farms to move out west or for employment in nearby mill towns, the ecology began to change. Young forests took over the once cultivated land and this is still reflected in present-day Atkinson with its high percentage of forest cover.

Atkinson's Economy

With the decline in agriculture and farming in Atkinson, the town sought other ways to revive its economy. During the late 19th century, Atkinson tried to promote the community as a summer tourist attraction by putting a new emphasis on the beautification of the town which included the planting of trees along Maple Avenue that still stand today. The 20th century in Atkinson was also represented by a significant decline in agricultural activity for the town and by 1942, there was only one remaining milk route to Haverhill. Atkinson continued its attempts to promote the town as a resort town in the early years of the 20th century.

In the first ten years of the 20th century, a trolley car line was proposed to run from Haverhill to Hampstead to the playground area of Island Pond. The transition in transportation to automobiles led to the cancellation of this trolley car line, but Island Pond still had summer cottages that have mostly been converted to full time residences today. With the advent of the automobile, crushed stone surfaces began to take the place of mud and gravel on farm-to-market roads, and these new roads would soon become the network of interstate highways that now surround the town. During the 1950's and 1960's, increased use and creation of automobiles and automobile infrastructure soon led to residents commuting out of town for employment, and by 1979, 61.8% of the town's workforce was employed out of Atkinson. Due to Atkinson's location, Boston's urban sprawl, the airport in Massachusetts, along with New Hampshire's more favorable tax rate, Atkinson experienced a tremendous increase in population which led to Atkinson becoming a prime residential community in the Southern New Hampshire region.

SIGNIFICANT ATKINSON HISTORICAL FIGURES, SITES, AND STRUCTURES

Atkinson has a rich history that was shaped by its former residents that helped to create the town's unique sense of place through historic resources. Though Atkinson has a rich history and an abundance of historic landmarks, features, and structures, a few important historic sites and structures in town help distinguish Atkinson's unique character today. Below are some significant individuals, sites, and structures that played a role in Atkinson's history.

Reverend Stephen Peabody

Stephen Peabody was born in Andover, MA (now Boxford, MA) on November 11, 1741. He graduated from Harvard at the age of 29 and studied divinity with another minister for three years. In 1772, Peabody was called to serve as the Town of Atkinson's first minister. He settled in Atkinson as the first pastor of the Congregational Church, and he bought a small farm and built what we know today as the Kimball House.

Reverend Peabody became very involved in town and was a leader of education in Atkinson. One of the rooms in his home was used as a schoolroom by Mrs. Colby, a dame school for boys and girls. One day, Rev. Peabody's brother, Phillips from Andover, and his Uncle John from Exeter, told him that an academy was being built in Andover and Exeter. This information helped Rev.

Peabody when two men proposed to construct Atkinson's very own academy. Reverend Peabody's son Stephen was born in 1773 and he was one of the first Atkinson students to attend the academy. His daughter Polly entered the academy in 1791 and became the first girl to enroll at Atkinson academy making the school the second academy in the country to be co-educational. A monument is located in Atkinson Cemetery for Rev. Peabody that was erected by a grandson.

Atkinson Schooling and the Center School

Education in Atkinson started in the community as early as 1769 when "Sculmasters" were hired in Atkinson and set up in private homes. By 1774, the town was divided into three school districts each with their own schoolhouses. By 1869 there were six school districts in Atkinson, each with its own schoolhouse including the Center School. The original Center School was located in the field opposite of the Rockwell building and by 1878 the original Center School was abandoned and physically moved to be attached as a shed to the Union Store on Academy Avenue; the school shed has since been demolished. But a new Center School was built in 1880 and was open until 1948 when the Rockwell School opened. Today, the Center School is Atkinson's last remaining one room Schoolhouse. In August 2022, the Center School, located across from Atkinson Academy, was placed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places.

Atkinson Academy



Above: Atkinson Academy

The Town of Atkinson has provided education to the children going back to the beginning of the Town. The first Atkinson Academy was built in 1787 on land donated by Dr. Cogswell at the corner of Meditation Lane and Academy Avenue. The original Atkinson Academy was a one-story building with a spacious fireplace. Atkinson Academy was a private-school and required students pay tuition to attend. In 1802, the Atkinson Academy burned down, and the new Atkinson Academy was built in 1803 in the location we know today as Academy Avenue. The new academy was 34 feet by 60 feet, two stories high, with a cupola. A portion of Atkinson Academy was partitioned off in 1843 when the Academy Trustees entered an agreement with the town to allow town meetings to be held in the building. In 1880 the town built the Center School. The town's last remaining one-room schoolhouse opened in 1880 to 1949. The second Atkinson Academy served until 1949 when the Trustees closed the doors as a secondary school due to high schools in the surrounding towns offering expanded programs. In 1949 the Universal Unitarian Church was remodeled, and the Rockwell school was opened.

After the Atkinson Academy closed, many Atkinson students attended the Rockwell School. After a few years of the Atkinson Academy lying dormant, the Academy Trustees turned the building over to the town in hopes it would be used for educational purposes. The building stood empty for several years and began to deteriorate. It was repaired and restored by the Alumni Association who raised funds for repairs.

In the early 1960's, the Timberlane Regional School District was formed, and at that time the grammar school utilized the Atkinson Academy and the Rockwell School. As the population grew, Rockwell School was no longer able to house all the students so more extensive renovations were made to Atkinson Academy. The Rockwell School was closed in late 1970's.

The Atkinson Academy school had been closed for about twenty years during the mid-20th century, and then became a public school and part of the Timberlane Regional School District in 1958. Several additions were made to the original building starting with a large wing on the east side of the building which provided four large classrooms, administrative offices, health offices, and an all-purpose room called Dyke Auditorium in honor of Harlon C. Dyke, the last headmaster of the Academy. The Atkinson Academy is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Atkinson Cemetery

Atkinson Cemetery, also referred to as Atkinson's "Old" and "New" Cemetery, was first established in 1773 when a piece of land was laid out on Main Street (now Academy Avenue). The first documented burial in the Atkinson Cemetery on Main Street was a Hampstead man who was being taken to North Parish Cemetery in Haverhill, MA but the road was impassable due to weather so when the funeral procession reached Atkinson Cemetery, it was decided the burial would take place there instead. In 1773, a vote was taken at town meeting to accept land from John Dow for the use as a burying yard. The half-acre parcel was located to the northwest of the original meetinghouse. In 1822, the town purchased another half-acre of land from Mr. David How, a trader who lived in Haverhill, to enlarge the cemetery. Mr. How also set aside a small

piece of land to be utilized as a town common, but this is not the same piece of land that is known as the Dow Common today. Mr. How's land that was located behind the meetinghouse and adjacent to the cemetery was traded for additional cemetery land around 1850. In 1907, additional cemetery land was acquired by donation from Joseph Kimball, a summer visitor in Atkinson. Joseph Kimball donated the land and Peabody House to the town to use as a library and possibly a museum with permission to use a portion of the land for a cemetery. The "New" Cemetery extension located behind the Kimball Library was laid out in 1912.

Kimball Library

In 1907, Joseph Kimball felt the need for Atkinson to have a permanent building to house a library. He purchased the former home of Reverend Stephen Peabody, from Mr. and Mrs. Walter Maddocks and donated the Peabody House to the Town of Atkinson with the stipulation that *"the buildings and ground be used for the needs and convenience of the town library, and perhaps a museum and art gallery; that it be named 'Kimball Library' and that a bronze tablet be placed in the building stating its name and giving a few words of explanation; the rear back of four hundred feet from the road may be used for graves if found desirable;"*. Reverend Peabody built the Kimball House in the beginning of 1772 after he purchased a twelve-acre parcel from Oliver Knight. The original house had eight rooms which still contains the gunstock beams and several Christian doors. Pegged, hand-hewn timbers can be seen in the double-thick granite and brick cellar. In 1882, Dr. Isaac Hovey came to Atkinson and for nearly fifty years practiced medicine in this house. The Walter Maddocks family of Boston bought the house in the early 1900s from the heirs of Dr. Hovey. They decided to modernize it, according to the Victorian style that was popular at the time. They constructed the large bay windows on two floors, elevated the roof, and added the two great central dormers at the front of the house. The Kimball House had remained as the town's permanent library since 1907 and as the town's population increased, the present Kimball Library was annexed in 1975 and the town then voted to approve the Kimball House for use as a museum. The Kimball House is now a free-standing building and is maintained by the Atkinson Historical Society. A new stand alone, state of the art Kimball Library was opened in 2008 on Academy Avenue.

Dow Common and Monument

The Dow Common and Monument was donated to the town by William C. Dodd to commemorate the soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Dedication ceremonies at this site were held in 1888. The monument was originally situated differently on the common but was moved in 1891 in order to construct a new road known today as the portion of Academy Avenue that turns towards Hampstead.



Above: Dow Common and Monument

Town Pound

In early Atkinson, many of the townspeople were farmers who owned a variety of animals including cattle, dogs, sheep, horses, and pigs for clothing and food. As more land was cleared and cultivated, the stock of animals in Atkinson increased and the need for Atkinson to provide some sort of containment of stray dogs, cattle, and other animals became necessary. In 1787, a committee of three people were elected to decide on the location of a town pound. At the next town meeting, residents voted to construct the town pound set on the hill above Mr. Grocer's house, now known as Main Street. Originally, the road went on the other side of the structure. The road was changed in the 1930's. A double-faced sign donated by the Historical Society, and a decorative fence and flowering shrubs have been placed on the westerly side of the enclosure abutting Stone Pound Lane. The Atkinson Garden Club continues to care for the garden area at the front of the Pound.

Atkinson's Historical Architecture and Landscape Vistas

Atkinson has a significant number of historic structures that have remained throughout many architectural eras. These historic structures, and their distinctive architectural features can still be seen in present day Atkinson. The architectural features of these structures help distinguish Atkinson as a unique community and provide a sense of history and character. Examples of these structures can be seen along Atkinson's Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway mostly along Main Street. Some of the architectural designs of these structures found in Atkinson include Georgian style, Federal-style, Greek Revival style, Colonial Revival style, and Bungalow style houses.

Designated landscape vistas on the Atkinson Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway include East Road, Maple Avenue, Main Street, Island Pond Road, Sawyer Avenue, Shannon Road, North Broadway, and Salem Road. Table 1 below identifies the forty significant historic structures identified along the Old Stage Coach Scenic Byway as found in the Atkinson Historical Society's informational brochure. These locations also correspond to a scenic byway roadmap. For more information about Atkinson's Scenic Byway visit the Transportation Profile of this Existing Conditions Report.

Table 1: Atkinson Byway Sites			
Historical Name	Description	Main Street #	Year Built
Colonial-era Stage Road Marker	Colonial period road marker at the start of Atkinson Stage Coach Byway.	26	-
Donated Town Forest Parcels		23-33	-
Greenleaf Clark House	Built by the man who, during the Revolutionary War period, had been New Hampshire's representative to the Continental Congress	29	c. 1820
Historic Name Unknown		35	c. 1905
Noyes House		43	c. 1895
Alanson Sawyer House	Served as an Atkinson School	46	c. 1850
Gilmartin House		51	c. 1900
Sawyer House		53	c. 1886
Thomas – Wheeler House	Built by Corporal William Thomas after returning from serving in the War of 1812. Thomas served as a State Rep. to the NH General Court, was on the Governor's Council in 1850, as a NH Representative to the US Congress, and as a US Senator from 1879 until his death in 1888. His great grandson Stephen Wheeler was born in this house and went on to become NH Attorney General, Associate Justice and then Chief of the NH Superior Court and from 1957 until his death in 1967 was an Associate Justice on the NH Supreme Court.	54	c. 1812
Historic Name Unknown		67	c. 1910
Taylor House		70	c. 1895
The Tunnel	A level roadway cut into the bottom of, and around the eastern side of Poore's Hill because of the many winter stage coach accidents and difficult travel on the icy and steep Stage Road over the hill.	68-84	c. 1857
Protected Open Space		74-86	2006
Abraham Dow House		3 Stage Rd.	c. 1870
Town Center Scenic Vista	Viewed to the north as you emerge from the Tunnel	85-101	-
Tristram Knight Farm	In 1767, Tristram and his three sons, Oliver, Stephen, and John were among the original petitioners to the NH General Court for Atkinson's incorporation as a NH town (separate from Plaistow)	88	c. 1757
Nathaniel Cogswell House	Served as Atkinson's Congregationalists' Sunday meeting site until the Atkinson Congregational Church was built Atkinson Academy students also boarded there	92	c. 1766
Cogswell Farm	Nathaniel and Judith Cogswell had 19 children. Their 8 boys served a total of 38 years of military service during the American Revolutionary War – a national record and more than any other family in the country!	95	c. 1740
Gilbert House	The early site of the Atkinson Free Public Library	98	c. 1770
Congregational Church		101	c. 1835

John Atwood House		102	c. 1772
John Bassett House		103	c. 1790
Knight House		104	c. 1840
John Gilbert House		105	c. 1790
Tenney House		106	c. 1840
L.P.E. Richards House		108	c. 1820
John Dow House	The oldest house in Atkinson. Dow was one of Atkinson's original settlers. In 1767, he was one of Atkinson's successful petitioners to the NH General Court for Atkinson to be incorporated as a NH town. His home was the site of early Atkinson Town Meetings. Dow also donated the land for the first and oldest section of Old Atkinson Cemetery. Dow House also served for a while as Atkinson's Post Office and General Store.	107	c. 1727
George Wright House		109	c. 1840
Atkinson Town Common	The Civil War Soldiers Monument was erected on the Common as an Honor Roll to honor Atkinson's Civil War soldiers. Dow Common was named after George Dow (one of John Dow's sons) who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery during the Civil War.	112	c. 1888
Atkinson Academy (National Reg)		-	1787, 1803
Atkinson "Old" Cemetery	Where Atkinson's earliest, colonial period settlers are buried.	114	1773
Charles Fernald House		115	1840
Page Homestead	The second oldest house in Atkinson, three Pages were among the first five settlers of Atkinson. In 1747, Johnathan Page was one of the colonists who petitioned the NH General Court for Plaistow (which included Atkinson) to be split off from Haverhill, Mass and be a NH town. In 1767, Pages were among those who petitioned the NH General Court for Atkinson to be split off from Plaistow and incorporated as a separate town.	129	c. 1737
Grover House/Inn	Mid-way point on the State route from Boston to Manchester and Concord. The Inn was a stopping point where stage horses were fed, watered, and rested while the passengers went into the Inn for a meal, use the outhouse, and usually rested over-night.	136	c. 1830
Town Pound	Where loose and wandering farm animals were kept until there were claimed by their owners	-	1788
Johnson House	Was believed to be haunted by the 22 different families that tried to live there, but were scared off and frightened into moving out of the house by strange noises, apparitions of people seen entering rooms with no one then found in the room, chairs rocking with no one in them, and footsteps at night.	2 Pope Road	c. 1810
Knight House	The third oldest house in Atkinson. Built before Atkinson was incorporated as a town.	160	c. 1740
Stephen Dole House	Dole was one of the original colonialists who petitioned the NH General Court for Atkinson to be incorporated as a NH town. Dole served in Atkinson's colonial militia and fought in the Revolutionary War.	165	c. 1776
Albert Little House		178	c. 1860
John Little House		180	c. 1840

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, EVENTS, AND TRADITIONS

Throughout the years, Atkinson's historic and cultural organizations have evolved and expanded, and some events and traditions have remained over time. Table 2 shows a list of the organizations and groups in Atkinson. (More recreation type programs and organizations can be

found within the Recreation Profile of this Existing Conditions Report). Below is a description of some of these organizations and groups.

Table 2: Historical and Cultural Organizations and Groups	
Atkinson Women’s Civic Club	Atkinson Lion’s Club
Atkinson Historical Society	Friends of the Library
Atkinson Garden Club	Boy Scout Troop 9
Atkinson Veterans Club	Girl Scout Troop 12573
Girl Scout Troop 59015	Cub Scout Pack 95

Atkinson Historical Society

The Atkinson Historical Society (AHS) was created in 1954, and the organization’s board consists of a president, a vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three board members. The Atkinson Historical Society is located in the Kimball House on Academy Avenue. The AHS typically conducts six meetings a year and has an active events team. The goals of the AHS include:

- To bring quality and interesting events into Atkinson to inform the public about a current topic of interest or historical topics of all kinds,
- To act as a resource to Atkinson residents by helping research specific homes or people from Atkinson,
- To preserve the history and records of Atkinson and New Hampshire, to maintain the Kimball Museum, to share local history, knowledge and friendship.

The Kimball House is home to Atkinson’s Historical Museum which is maintained by the AHS. The Kimball House has an extensive collection of maps, clothing, furniture, letters, and other documents related to the history of Atkinson. The Kimball House is open every Saturday from 10AM – 2PM. Recent projects of the AHS include the addition of hearse house gates and the cleaning of monuments at the Atkinson Cemetery, a gate and sign at the Town Pound, signs and plaques at the Dow Common, the addition of street signs honoring those lost in wars, a monument for WW2 and Korea, installation and dedication of a Vietnam honor roll, historic pictures in the Town Hall, and a plaque at the Atkinson Academy. In August 2022 the AHS had the Center School placed on New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. The AHS is the early phase of having the building restored and in the early phases of raising funds for this project.

Atkinson’s Lions Club

The Atkinson Lion’s Club was formed in 1976 when a group of men met in the Kimball Library to discuss the needs of the community and its residents. Today, the Atkinson Lions Club provides many services to the community including fundraising for projects, providing scholarships for high school seniors, turkey baskets for those in need during the holidays, and making donations to local food pantries. The Lions meet twice a month from September through May, dinner meetings are held at Atkinson Country Club and business meetings are held at Atkinson

Community Center. For the 2022-2023 year, there are fourteen officers and directors. Atkinson Lions Club is involved in many improvements throughout the community including building the town's bulletin board at the Kimball Library, the canoe launch on town owned land by Big Island Pond, serving behind the scenes as sponsors for Timberlane School spelling bees and skating parties, and hosting many fundraisers in Atkinson including the annual yard sale and pancake breakfasts.

Atkinson Women's Civic Club

Atkinson's Women's Civic Club was formed in 1974 and the first official meeting was held in January 1975. The club was formed to help serve the Town of Atkinson with financial and volunteer assistance. The Women's Civic Club sponsors many fundraising events including craft and food markets, town yard sales, shredding events, and Trivia Night. Monies earned from these fundraising events are then donated to various organizations throughout Atkinson to assist in special projects or to purchase equipment. Some of these donations go to the Atkinson Fire Department, Police Department, Schools, Scholarships, The Kimball Library, Scouts, and more. Today, the Civic Club consists of almost forty women. Other town events the Atkinson Women's Civic Club assists with or sponsors are candidate's night, refreshments for town meeting, the Memorial Day Parade, and the town's fishing derby.

Atkinson Garden Club

In 1951, Mrs. L. Joseph Eno, and a few other women from the Women's Club had a shared interest in gardening and decided to form a separate club to further pursue their shared interest. By 1952, the Atkinson Garden Club (AGC) was founded, and a president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer were elected. In 1956 the club joined the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs. The purpose of the Garden Club is to *"provide education, resources, state and national networking opportunities to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and to encourage civic and environmental responsibility among its members"*. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, March through December, at the Kimball Library, or at the Community Center. The Atkinson Garden Club is very active in the community and provides many beautification aspects that contribute to Atkinson's unique rural character. Club projects include the annual cleanup of common areas and annual plantings, decoration of public areas for the holidays, senior



outreach, scholarship to a Timberlane Regional High School Senior (AGC awards a \$750 scholarship to a local student that is pursuing a college program related to conservation, the environment or horticulture), donation of items for the Emmaus House, and the AGC sponsor's youth activities and many other projects in Atkinson.

Atkinson Veterans Club

Before the establishment of the Atkinson Veterans Club, first, the Atkinson Recreation Department started hosting Veterans Coffee Hours on Veterans Day, November 11, 2001. Then, the Atkinson Veterans Club was formed as one of Recreation Department's monthly programs in March 2002 as a social meeting place for a group of mostly retired former service men and women. The Atkinson Veterans Club was chartered in May 10, 2007. The Atkinson Veterans Club meets at the Atkinson Community Center the first Tuesday of each month. This club is open to all branches of military service and all Reserve components of the Military Armed Forces. The Club maintains three donation boxes for retired flag collection at the Town Hall, Community Center, and Library. The Atkinson Cemetery includes approximately 345 veteran burials, and the Veterans Club actively supports the Cemetery Caretaker. The Club is also involved in several other community events including the Memorial Day Parade and Dow Common Ceremony, and on Veterans Day, a brief ceremony and breakfast is held at the Atkinson Fire Department. Starting in 2019, the Atkinson Veterans Club has participated in the Wreaths Across America Program to place a "Remembrance Wreath" on all veteran graves in the Atkinson Cemetery. Some proceeds of the wreath sale revert to the Club which has pledged the variable proceeds to be used for flowers throughout the year on Veteran graves at the discretion of the Cemetery Caretaker. The Club has no formal affiliation with the VFW, American Legion, or other organized groups. The Club is not formally organized as a 501c3 non-profit.

Atkinson Churches

Atkinson Congregational Church

In 1772 the Atkinson Congregational Society was formed, and by 1835 a new church was built on Main Street on land that was donated by Joseph Cogswell. Before the construction of this church, Congregationalists would meet in the Atkinson Meetinghouse which opened its doors to numerous religious groups of the community. The Atkinson Meeting House was taken down in 1845. However, the Atkinson Congregational Church still remains today at its original location at 101 Main Street. In November of 2022, the Atkinson Congregational Church celebrated its 250th Anniversary. Since its establishment, the Atkinson Congregational Church has provided many services to the Atkinson community. This includes the Doris and Vivian Horton

Scholarship which is awarded to students entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year of college for the upcoming academic year with the requirement that at least one member of their family must be members of Atkinson Congregational Church for the past three years or more.



Above: Atkinson Congregational Church