

Colonel Crafts has left his equestrian profile on our familiar sign, his legacy of majestic elms and maples shading our grounds, and his spirit of uncompromising good taste and hospitality on every greeting, eating and meeting at the Publick House. Today we like to believe that nothing much has changed at the Publick House, and this is essentially true. We invite our guests to stop by our famous Bake Shoppe with home-made sweets, breads, and relishes to go. The sweet pecan rolls are a specialty of the Publick House.



This early deck was converted into Paige Hall



Paige Hall today

TODAY...

The Publick House has been known for over 240 years for providing legendary Yankee hospitality, which will make your event memorable. While maintaining its 18th century ambiance, we provide 21st century comforts. When you come to the Publick House to feast on our generous meals and enjoy the comfort of our Yankee hospitality, you'll be warmed by the same magnificent open hearths that warmed our early American ancestors. Over the years our property has grown to what it is today- a destination offering four different lodging facilities, two fine restaurants, and service from an era that has long passed by.



Tillyer House

Our property boasts 128 guest rooms ranging from gracious suites to our Country Motor Lodge all in a historical setting with private baths and air conditioning. Be sure to visit our Bake Shoppe, a real 18th century bakery, where irresistible things come out of our Yankee ovens.



Chamberlain House

1771

Publick House

Historic Inn & Country Lodge

On the Common, Route 131 ~ Sturbridge, MA 01566
800.782.5425 ~ 508.347.7323 ~ www.publickhouse.com



STURBRIDGE AND ITS HISTORY...

Sturbridge, home of the Publick House Historic Inn, stands astride the Crossroads of New England. U.S. Route 20 and Interstate 90 take travelers from Boston to Oregon while Interstate 84 may take them to New York and points west. It was predestined to be a main thoroughfare. The "Old Fordway to Tantiusques," Tantiusque being the original name of the town, was used by the Indians when they traveled to Plymouth bringing the Pilgrims corn. In their turn, the first white settlers traveled over the same route on their first westward journeys. In 1633 John Oldham was traveling the ford when Indians showed him strange pieces of "black rock" and so the first graphite mine was discovered in America. The ford was frequently mentioned in old



Guest arriving at the Publick House Historic Inn in the 1940's

records. Located on the Native American Bay Path, it was the only fording place for many miles to the North and South for travelers passing East and West. It also met the famous "Woodstock Path" running from Hartford and Providence to the North. Then, as now, the junction of routes made Sturbridge strategically important.

During the Revolutionary War, Sturbridge Common, which was given by the Saltonstalls "For Publick Use Forever," was the scene of great activity. The Militia drilled on the green lawn. Stores were collected and hoarded. Colonel Ebenezer Crafts himself personally equipped and supplied a company of cavalry for George Washington's Army.

In modern times, the 1800 acre property was home to the United States Army 366th Regiment in 1942-43 as a training center for men prior to being shipped overseas in World War II. A special ceremony marked the opening of the school as part of the First Command Tactical School. A parade was held in Sturbridge with a simulated bombing, a first aid drill and an interdiction of an invading enemy. A training building became also an early Defense Center where civilian volunteers would watch for aircraft flying over Sturbridge and try to identify them from Aircraft Spotters Handbook and report the same by telephone to the Air Corps. That building, split into two, can be seen today as being the two white houses located behind the Publick House along the rear exit road. This regiment left their home at Fort Devens in October 1943 to serve in combat in Italy at the Gothic Line



In its early days, the Publick House on the Common was a favorite place for the teamsters. The Inn's founder and keeper, Colonel Ebenezer Crafts, made frequent rounds and saw to it that each guest was satisfied and comfortable. In 1824 the tavern and the common were visited by General

Lafayette and his son, George Washington Lafayette. Over 3,000 people assembled on the Green to greet the Revolutionary War hero. Great preparations were made at the Publick House for Lafayette.

One good lady of the town carried her best china to the Inn for the General's use. It joggled all the way in a cart, contemporary records note, and arrived at its destination without one piece being broken. The General however, was behind in his schedule and the Taproom's hospitality proved so bountiful that he ventured no further into the Inn, but presently proceeded with his journey.

Sturbridge itself came into being in 1730 when a drawing was made for homestead lots by such families as the Clarks, Plimptons, Hardings, Gleasons, Fiskes, and others. The name Sturbridge was adopted because ancestors of the first settlers had come from Stourbridge in Worcestershire, England. Actually, permission had been given by the General Court for settlement and speculations a year earlier. Certain stipulations were made; seven years from the date, 50 families had to be settled in houses which were at least 18 feet square. The founders were also bidden to settle a "learned orthodox minister and lay out him a house lot equal to the other house lots."

Sturbridge became a cultural center and in 1824 the first Sturbridge Fair was started for the purpose of awakening more interest in husbandry and the mechanic arts. By 1855, the Fair was incorporated as a Society and the attendance increased rapidly. In 1834, the first balloon ascension in this part of New England was made from the Fair grounds. The "pilot" was Madame Carlotta of New York and the records show that her performances increased the gate by \$700 over the year before.



Guests enjoying a meal in the Barn Room