



Powisset Farm is located in the town of Dover on Powisset Street and is a prime example of how Dover remains an agricultural community today. (Photograph courtesy of Powisset Farm)

History

It was common in New England for towns to establish a “town pound” where stray animals could be held until they were claimed by their owners. Because of Dover’s agricultural lifestyle in the past, people found town pounds extremely helpful for any farm animals that had escaped from their owners.

Frank Smith's 1897 book, *Narrative History, A History of Dover, Massachusetts*, explains why the Town Pound was necessary:

“In the early settlement of the parish, cattle, swine, and sheep ran at large and were a constant annoyance. The selectmen took early action to abate this nuisance.

On June 8, 1785, Ebenezer Newell, who lived at the center of the district, was appointed pound-keeper, with his barnyard for a pound.

In 1794 the district provided a pound, which was built twenty-four feet square within the wall, and cost £16. Cattle and swine were allowed to run at large as late as 1794. “

The idea of a town pound was very important to our society and would be used for many years. The Dover Town Pound stands today to remind us of New England’s fascinating past and is one of Dover’s few remaining historical sites.

The Dover Town Pound



Dover Church Lower Lot
Dover, MA 02030

Contact David Weden for info at:
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Photographs of town pound by
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2015 Refurbishment

- Before renovating the Dover Town Pound, the shrubs on the inside were overgrown, there was a tree affecting the view from the church, and the overall site looked run down.
- The tree was removed, the brush cleared and mulch laid down to make one of our town's most important historical sites a more attractive place.
- The Town of Dover cut down the tree to make the pound safe for the workers and visitors.

The Dover Town Pound is now mulched and has an attractive new sign providing the date of its construction and refurbishings



History (cont.)

- The Dover Town Pound was last refurbished in 1965 by Theodore Chase.
- Town pounds were built to store animals that were a problem or were illegally running loose.
- Because of Dover's agricultural lifestyle in the 18th and 19th centuries, people found town pounds extremely helpful to hold escaped farm animals.

Town Pound Styles

- Interestingly enough, there were several different styles of pounds that a town could choose to construct. The Dover Town Pound is of a traditional dry stone style.
- Some towns around Dover, including Westwood, chose to build their town pounds out of wood because it was much easier and cheaper. Eventually, however, they switched to stone as it was more durable and easier to maintain.