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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE (WINTERTHUR PROGRAM), M.A., 1981

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FARMERS AND AESTHETES:
A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE CORNISH ART COLONY
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TOWN OF
CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
1885-1930

by

Christine Ermenc

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of
arts in Early American Culture.

December, 1981

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CHAPTER I

SETTING THE STAGE:

THE DECLINE OF AGRICULTURE IN NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

Cornish New Hampshire, unlike many sites of scenic wonder in the state, does little in the way of promoting its attractions to the world at large. It is a small village, easily missed, for with the waning of agriculture in the region, white pines have grown up amongst the once-cleared pasturage, sheltering farmhouse and villa from the outsider's curious eye. Residents of this town and its neighboring town of Plainfield are jealous of their privacy, and many of them posed strenuous objections several years ago when the National Park Service (which maintains the Augustus St. Gaudens homesite) wished to place a standard-sized National Park sign at the entrance to the site on Route 12-A, the major road through town. A smaller, custom-made sign now marks the entrance, easily missed by tourists, the parksite staff complain sometimes. Aside from this small sign and several country villas on the hillsides hidden by the trees, little remains to mark the existence of the Cornish Colony, a group of artists, writers, musicians, and architects who made the place their summer home for fifty years, spanning the period 1885 to 1930.

The town of Cornish was in existence more than one hundred years before these artists set foot there; its charter was granted June 21,
1763 to Reverend Samuel McClintock and 69 other subscribers. The locality's first major industry stemmed from its natural resources; liberal forests of white pine were designated for masts of the ships in His Majesty's Royal Navy. The terrain was hilly and hard to cultivate by our standards today; nonetheless, most of the settlers in town operated small-scale farms and small industries on the banks of the rivers and streams. The farms supported their owners marginally, if not profitably. Gristmills and sawmills, tanneries and fulling mills supplied most of the needs of a self-sufficient farming community, and the population of Cornish increased steadily from 982 inhabitants in 1790 to 1726 inhabitants in the year 1840.1

After 1840, the population of Cornish declined, dropping to 934 inhabitants in 1890.2 William Child, the town historian of Cornish ascribed this drop to a decline in agricultural production in the region, commenting:

While the population of this country has steadily increased, many of the earlier settled towns of New England have shown a great decline. The increasing tendency of the young men and women of recent years to avoid the severe manual labor of their ancestors; the attractions to the great West with its labor-saving machinery; the innumerable professions and trades which offer better wages at a less expense of muscle, oftentimes coupled with the charms of city life, -- all these and many other causes have been, and are still at work luring the young men from the rugged hillsides to lives of fancied enjoyment elsewhere.... 3

The Cornish experience was symptomatic of much of the hill country of northern New England. The years from 1783 to 1880 had been ones of rapid industrialization and westward expansion. Many ambitious
New Englanders seeking more than a marginal existence were lured from the rocky New England hillsides by the promise of regular wages and upward advancement, or by visions of greener, flatter pastures to be had for the taking. In 1867, the New England Farmer ran one of many notices in its advertising section promoting Union Pacific Railroad lands: "...1,000,000 acres of land for sale at $3 and upwards per acre, and not a foot of wastelands; ...on purchase, no payment of the principal required...free from taxation for six years." When such land was described as having soil of "INEXHAUSTIBLE DEPTH AND UNSURPASSED FERTILITY " incentives to move became even harder to resist.

In an effort to contain the threat of centrifugal migration, many editorials in farmers' magazines tried to stress the negative aspects of the American west. One editorial in Farmers Monthly Visitor warned its readers that while land in the west was more fertile, and profits more readily attained, "... the social, moral, literary, and religious privileges are there much less."

The cities also received negative publicity. One editorial entitled "Stick to the Farm, Young Man" published in the New England Farmer of June, 1854 exhorted its readers in these words:

You are tempted to exchange the hard work of the farm to become a clerk in a city shop....You, by birth and education intended for the upright, independent, manly citizen, to call no man master and to be no man's servant, would become first the errand boy of the shop, to fetch and carry like a spaniel, then the salesman... to bow and smile, and cringe and falter, to attend upon the wishes of every painted and padded form of humanity, ...and finally,...a trader,...compelled to look anxiously at the current prices of cotton and railroad stocks in order to learn each morning whether you are bankrupt or not; and in the end to...sigh for your native hills."
However, these appeals to American ideology and nostalgia were, in the end, unsuccessful. New Hampshire's Board of Agriculture's figures for the total number of people employed in agriculture in the state show a significant decline in the latter part of the nineteenth century, dropping from 64,573 agricultural residents in 1870 to 30,782 agricultural residents by the turn of the century.  

A decrease in agricultural land values accompanied the decline in farm productivity and the number of farmers in New Hampshire. In 1870, the computed value of farmland and farm buildings in New Hampshire was $111,493,660, and by 1890, the value had dropped to $80,427,490.  

The State Board of Agriculture responded to the problem by petitioning the State Legislature in 1890 to

...enact a law by which the inducements offered by the abandoned, neglected, and uncultivated farms may be brought to the attention of the vast numbers of industrious and thrifty persons annually coming to this country to purchase land.

In addition, the Board conducted an elaborate town-by-town survey of abandoned farms, eventually publishing its findings in the form of a nationally disseminated 103-page booklet listing the locations of vacant farms in the state. A major focus of the booklet involved the financial potential of the summer recreations industry; abandoned farms, after all were easily converted into summer residences for the wealthy and the middle classes.

This marketing strategy met with more success, and by the latter part of the nineteenth century, summer recreation had become a signi-
ficant industry in New Hampshire. In 1891, it was declared that summer residents and boarders were bringing in more than five million dollars per year. Nearly every summer issue of the Vermont Journal (published just across the river from Cornish, and serving the mid-valley region) carried an advertisement similar to this:

Do you want cash for your farm? I am receiving many inquiries from wealthy city clients about Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine farms suitable for summer houses, especially those convenient to fishing ponds and brooks. If you have any property that will fulfill their requirements, send me a description, together with your best price, then I will write and tell you what it will cost you to have it converted into cash. Responses to be addressed to M. O. Kelley, 436 State Street, Albany, New York.

By 1903 when New Hampshire was determining the focus of its contribution to the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, the major spokesperson, William H. Weston of Lisbon, New Hampshire urged that agricultural exhibits should not even be attempted. The Littleton Courier, paraphrasing his views noted:

...the New Hampshire products would not stand much show in competition with the agricultural products of the west. He thinks that the entire appropriation should be expanded in advertising our summer resort industry. The hotel men should be urged to consign large quantities of printed matter bearing on their localities; there should be an elaborate pictorial representation of our most noted scenic beauties, and plenty of information in printed form in regard to what visitors would find when they entered our confines. Tell them of our majestic peaks, our babbling brooks, our picturesque valleys, our glorious climate, our magnificent hotels, our beautiful lakes, our trout streams, our hospitable people, and show them the handsome summer homes that have been reared in the midst of our wonderful scenery by men of means from all over the country. Proclaim New Hampshire's attractions at every possible opportunity, and then watch the results. Advertising of the proper sort pays and pays handsomely.
Although there were a fair number of New Englanders who felt "...that it is not cows we should milk, but city people...," one did not have to be wealthy to summer in New Hampshire. The Vermont Journal repeatedly carried advertisements urging Vermont and New Hampshire residents with room in their homes for summer boarders to reach "...thousands of Brooklyn people" by placing advertisements with the Brooklyn Daily Eagle.\footnote{15} National periodicals such as Country Life in America featured articles similar to Arthur Huntingdon Gleason's "New Hampshire: A State for Sale at $10 an Acre" published November of 1905.

The mid-century expansion of the railroads had once fostered economic decline in the New England region, by helping to give western-grown agricultural products the competitive edge over New England products. Now, in the 1890's, railroads furthered economic regeneration by making possible the migration of thousands of middle-class urban dwellers to the cool of the northern mountains in the summers, there to spend money and stimulate the economy of the region.

Artists in general were people in the middle ranges of the economic bracket; and not too surprisingly, most of the American art colonies founded between 1890 and 1910 were located in scenic communities which for one reason or another had fallen on hard times. The Art Colony of Woodstock founded in 1902 spread its roots in a region which had suffered a collapse in its chief source of income: rock quarrying declined drastically with the widespread use of cement pavement at the turn of the century. Cape Cod's fishing industry had reached its zenith by the middle years of the 1880's; at the same time, the whaling industry
was victimized by the introduction of cheaper Pennsylvania petroleum. In 1899, Charles Hawthorne opened his summer school in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Old Lyme, Connecticut was another seaport community which had fallen on hard times; here too, land values had depreciated to the extent of encouraging artists to invest in property and become permanent or summer residents. The Cornish-Plainfield area in 1885 was a lovely, isolated agricultural region which had seen better days—a setting type-cast for an artistic retreat.
CHAPTER II

THE LURE OF ARCADIA: PHILOSOPHICAL BASES

Financial incentives were but one of many factors luring Americans to the country in the late nineteenth century. A good part of the Arcadian magnetism lay in the positive philosophical associations increasing numbers of Americans invested in their country's rural and frontier territory. The back-to-nature trend had become a popular movement permeating most levels of American society, and as such, it marked a significant attitudinal change. In 1831, half a century earlier, Alexis de Tocqueville journeyed to the United States, and made a special trip to Michigan in search of wilderness and the American Indian. In his journal, he noted with some surprise the typical American attitude towards the land:

To break through impenetrable forests, to cross deep rivers, to brave pestilential marshes, to sleep in the damp woods—these are exertions that the American readily contemplates if it is a question of earning a guinea; for that is the point. But that one should do such things from curiosity is more than his mind can take in. Living in the wilds, he only prizes the works of men. He will gladly send you off to see a road, a bridge, or a fine village. But that one should appreciate great trees and the beauty of solitude, that possibility completely passes him by.

Tocqueville was aware that the attitudes he was recording were common in areas where settlement had only recently taken place, and he ascribed his own attraction for the American wilds to his European...
cultured background, and his espousal of Romantic aesthetic conventions. He suspected that as a general rule, it was the people furthest removed from the frontier who valued it most.\(^2\)

By the late nineteenth century, many urbanized and industrialized United States citizens on the east coast had achieved the necessary psychic distance from the wilderness to begin to appreciate it. Popular journals catering primarily to urban and suburban dwellers began to proliferate. *Countryside, Country Calendar, Suburban Life, Country Life in America, Country Gentleman* and *House Beautiful* were all founded around the turn of the twentieth century, and other periodicals such as *Good Housekeeping, the Saturday Evening Post, the Woman's Home Companion*, and *Ladies Home Journal* devoted regular columns and feature articles to rural life.

Henry James, one of the American intellectuals attracted by the Arcadian movement wrote *The American Scene* in 1906 after a long sojourn in Europe. He conceived of the work as a drama, the major subject being "...the great adventure of a society reaching into the apparent void for the amenities, the consummations, after having earnestly gathered so many of the preparations, the necessities."\(^3\) James' description of the New York Villas along Fifth Avenue projected ephemerally fashionable buildings flaunting the trappings of wealth, yet crammed so close to each other and to the street that the effect was lost in multiplicity. "There was no achieved protection," James noted, "no constituted mystery of retreat, no saving complexity, not so much as might be represented by the foot of a garden wall or a prelimi-
nary stretch of interposing shade." James bemoaned the fact that

...in such conditions, there couldn't be any manners to speak
of. ...It was as if the projection had been so completely
outward that one could find oneself almost uneasy about
the mere perspective required for the common acts of
personal life.4

As with manners, so with morals: Henry James, continuing his
musings in The American Scene deplored the effects of America's lack of
tradition. James stood very much against the impermanence intrinsically
part of a society

...serenely plundering in order to re-invest, and re-
investing in order to plunder.5 ...It takes an endless
amount of history to make even a little tradition,
and an endless amount of tradition to make even a
little taste, and an endless amount of taste by the
same token to make even a little tranquillity.6

Not surprisingly, James' summer peregrinations in search of tranquillity
periodically took him to the White Mountains, to Chocorus, New Hamp-
shire.

James' book was one expression of a change in the climate of
American thought. Buoyant optimism was increasingly replaced with sober
assessment; muckrakers and Progressive politicians alike published
scathing accounts of unethical business practices, and rumblings from
the labor force were beginning to surface as well. Doubts and uncer-
tainties arose from many sectors as to the quality of American democracy,
for the government and its economy, although founded on principles of
individual rights had grown so vastly complex that the "upright, manly,
and independent" American citizen no longer had power to effect much
change as an individual. Worse yet, hordes of southern European immi-
grants to the country posed a threat to his bloodline. Augustus St. Gaudens, safely settled in the heart of New England was dismayed by the fact that New York City was becoming a regular "New Jerusalem."7

Nature, especially the natural setting in the upper reaches of New England could be invested with a moral and strengthening influence. For one thing, rural New England could be associated with the birth of the American Republic, with hardy Yankee Anglo-Saxon stock, and with America's frontier past, factors commonly believed responsible for the more desirable aspects of the national character. Tangible remnants of the earlier lifestyle in the form of abandoned farmhouses could be bought and refurbished at little expense. Joy Wheeler Dow suggested the psychological satisfaction inherent in such an undertaking with his statement that Americans wanted "...to belong somewhere and to something, not to be entirely cut off from ourselves as stray atoms in outer space."8 However, most Americans could not lay claim to an ancestral home; Dow's solution for the average American was to at least present the appearance of stability and tradition. He noted,

We may not indeed have inherited the house we live in; the chances are we have not. We may not remember that either of our parents or any of our grandparents before us ever gloried in the possession of an ideal...homestead ...; but for the sake of goodness, for the sake of making the world appear a more decent place to live in--let us pretend that they did and it is ours. Let us pretend that God has been so good to us, and that we have proved worthy of his trust.9

Moral appreciation for the American rural landscape was bolstered by aesthetic appreciation. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a few select and scattered members of America's artistic and literary
scene expressed through their work a deep appreciation for landscape and the wild. By the second half of the century, the Arcadian experience had attained enough popular support to become firmly established in art and literature. Moncure D. Conway, reviewing the Paris Exposition of 1867 for Harper's Weekly Magazine, noted favorable reactions to Bierstadt and Cole landscapes, remarking at the same time upon the prevalence of landscaping painting. He stated: "There is everywhere scattered over these walls those pictures which denote by their very peacefulness and strangeness the feverishness of our crowded life in Europe, and the pining of poetic minds for a simpler and more serene existence." Mentioning Rousseau, Emerson, and Thoreau as literary forerunners of a landscape movement, Conway concluded that the lure of the rural

...entered the pictorial art later, perhaps, but is now dominant therein as these hundreds of pure arca­dian scenes and tinted earthly edens attest. Amidst the fashions of Paris, through London's canopy of smoke, the young eyes of genius are looking over the roofs of the world to catch some gleam of the land where it seems always afternoon....

The appeal of the rural landscape for late nineteenth century American artists and literary figures was manifold. Many of these artists who had been trained in Europe found reinforcement in the fact that the landscape movement was promulgated by European artists and accepted in European art circles. Stronger spirits thought of themselves as arbiters of American taste and American values. Kenyon Cox, Herbert Croly, Thomas Dewing, Percy MacKaye, and Winston Churchill, to name a few of the Cornish colonists, were continually working to instill moral

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sensibilities and aesthetic appreciation in their various publics, and to establish American traditions. These men were quite aware of the corruptions of business and government in the late 1880's, and believed that America's lack of tradition was having pernicious effect. Several of them expressed a need for more positive reinforcement as a minority group.

The New England environment held the promise of moral instruction. And the concept of a retreat to the wilds had a long, even Biblical history as a road towards self-actualization. Cornish, New Hampshire was sparsely populated; artists summering together at that location were no longer predisposed to feel lost in the crowds. And Cornish was indeed beautiful; years before, Thomas Cole, describing the Connecticut Valley region in his Essay on American Scenery provided an apt description of the setting.

In the Connecticut, [Cole noted] we behold a river that differs widely from the Hudson. Its sources are amidst the wild mountains of New Hampshire; but it soon breaks into a luxuriant valley, and flows for more than a hundred miles, sometimes in the shadow of wooded hills, and sometimes glancing through the green expanse of elm-besprinkled meadows. Whether we see it at Haverhill, Northampton, or Hartford, it still possesses that gentle aspect; and the imagination can scarcely conceive Arcadian vales more lovely or more peaceful than the valley of the Connecticut--its villages are rural places where trees overspread every dwelling, and the fields upon its margin have the richest verdure.12

In the middle years of the 1880's, Cornish's picturesquely dilapidated farmhouses, peopled by descendents of pioneer yeomen began to draw artists to the area.
CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDING OF THE COLONY

Augustus St. Gaudens is commonly regarded as the father of the Cornish Colony, but the real founder of the colony was not an artist at all. Charles Coatesworth Beaman was a lawyer in the prominent New York firm of Evarts, Southmayd, Choate, and Beaman. William Maxwell Evarts, senior partner in the firm, came of eighteenth century Vermont stock. Over the years, his family had come to own a large parcel of land in Windsor, Vermont, directly across the Connecticut River from Cornish. Beaman married Evarts' daughter in 1874, and soon afterwards set about acquiring land across the river from his in-laws' estate in the less-prosperous town of Cornish, where land was cheap. He promptly amassed close to one thousand acres.

Beaman and the Evarts family had close ties with New York's artistic and literary set and enjoyed their company; desirous of upgrading the social and intellectual life at Cornish, they encouraged their artistic friends to join them there in the summers. Augustus St. Gaudens completed a bust of William Maxwell Evarts in 1874, eleven years later executing a bronze medallion of Evart's grandson, William Evarts Beaman. In 1885, St. Gaudens was hard at work on the plans for his statue of Lincoln commissioned for the Lincoln Park in
Chicago, and was looking for a summer residence; he detailed his introduction to the Cornish setting in his *Reminiscences*.

We hit upon Cornish because while I was casting about for a summer residence, Mr. C. C. Beaman told me that if I would go up, he had an old house there which he would sell me for what he paid for it--five hundred dollars. When I first caught sight of the building on a rainy day in April, it appeared so forbidding and relentless that one might have imagined a skeleton half hanging out the window, shrieking and dangling in the gale with the sound of clanking bones. I was for fleeing at once.

To persuade me to come, Mr. Beaman had said that there were 'plenty of Lincoln-shaped men up there'. He was right. So during the summer of my arrival and in the one hundred year old barn of the house, I made my sketch of the standing Lincoln.¹

Augustus St. Gaudens did not immediately warm to the spare Georgian lines of the old brick turnpike tavern known as "Huggins' Folly" which Beaman offered him, opting to rent it summer by summer. By the next year, St. Gaudens, thoroughly habituated to the Cornish lifestyle, eagerly reopened discussions with Beaman over the purchase of the place. Beaman by this time did not want to sell, and it was not until 1891 that St. Gaudens managed to buy the place for the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars and a medallion portrait of Mr. Beaman.²

In the meantime, several other artists had made the place their summer home. George deForest brush, painter of American Indians, built his own teepee on the St. Gaudens land for a year, then rented a small house in the neighboring town of Plainfield. In 1886, Thomas Dewing and Maria Oakey Dewing rented a cottage from Beaman, and did much to publicize the beauty of the setting among their friends. Dewing's friend
Henry Oliver Walker, the muralist, bought land, bringing in his turn Charles Platt, a landscape painter and budding architect. Platt, who had studied etching with Stephen Parrish, passed word of Cornish to his mentor. Parrish, charmed with the setting, bought land in 1893, built a house and eventually became a year-round resident, as did his son, Frederick Maxfield Parrish. Anne Lazarus, Arthur Whiting, Henry Prellwitz, and Kenyon and Louise Cox followed soon after. Kenyon Cox (The Classic Point of View, 1911) and Charles Platt (Italian Gardens, 1892) were writers as well as artists, and they were instrumental in attracting a more literary crowd. By the middle years of the 1890's, summer residents of Cornish included playwrights Louis Evan Shipman and Percy MacKaye, Herbert Croly, political thinker and editor of the Architectural Record, Norman Hapgood, editor of Collier's Weekly, Winston Churchill, the novelist, and a host of others. These people in turn attracted a group of lawyers and politicians to the area in the period between 1905 and 1915, notably George Rublee, member of the 1915 Federal Trade Commission and the Versailles Peace Treaty Commission and President Woodrow Wilson, who made Cornish the site of his "summer White House" from 1913 to 1915. Over one hundred members of America's artistic, literary, and political circles made the place their summer home between the years 1885 and 1930.
CHAPTER IV

COLONY LIFE: PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES

It is generally agreed that the initial factor drawing the colonists to Cornish was the beauty of the setting. Hubert Deming, a native of Cornish who worked as a caretaker in several of the colony homes expressed the thoughts of many, saying,

They wanted nice views. I think most of those people who came to visit, the earlier artists got interested in the scenery, the beautiful landscape, the trees, the rolling hills, the covered bridge, Ascutney Mountain in the background and this and that. They were attracted by the natural beauty I think more than anything else. They could use the landscape in their paintings.

Frances Grimes, describing her life as an assistant for St. Gaudens noted:

In the summer, we ate our lunches at the edge of the pine wood or on benches under the trees with our eyes on the landscape and the songs of the birds and the sighings of the pine boughs in our ears. ...I can remember when I used to try long tedious hours at some monotonous task, how hot and dusty the road up the long steep hill was on summer afternoons, how slippery it was in winter, and how fatiguing when the snow was deep, but what comes to mind soonest and is deepest there is how interesting the changes in the landscape were, and how I enjoyed looking for the footprints of little animals in the snow, and seeing the modelling at the edges of snowdrifts, watching the coming of the leaves in the spring and the changing of their colors in the fall.... Always, there was the appreciation that we were fortunate to be in that beautiful country....
For some artists, aesthetic appreciation was bolstered by the ambrosial effect of this natural eden on their psyches. Percy MacKaye writing from New York to his wife, said, "...How glad I shall be to wake and to sleep again in the medicinal quiet of the dear Cornish hills. I'm nearly done in by the strain here...."\(^3\)

As might be expected, both work and recreation for most of the early colony members were inevitably bound up with visual experience. "Seeing is what we were doing all the time." Ms. Grimes continued.

Once when we had returned from a picnic, Adams said women should be careful what they wore to picnics, it made such a difference: they should wear white or bright colors. I made a mental note, always wear white or bright colors to a picnic; what was seen in that sense, the pictorial sense was so important.

...This view perhaps explains why so many of the women in Cornish had unusual beauty...\(^4\)

In the early years, the thirst for unadulterated nature was so great that some of the artists eschewed fly screens on their windows.

For others, nature had its limitations. Kenyon Cox, writing to Winston Churchill mused:

Your cows are rather more an added ornament to the prospect than otherwise, and quite becoming to the landscape--ça va bien dans le paysage--but could the bell be conveniently modified or suppressed? Its tintinnabulation in the early morning is somewhat insistent and very close at hand as, at that hour the gentle ruminants like the shade of the trees along the boundary fence. I don't object to it so much myself, but the ladies seem to feel it an interruption to their beauty sleep.\(^5\)

A few years later, George Rublee was to object so strenuously to the lowing of cows in the neighboring pasture that he had them removed.
Rublee, an inveterate tennis player, felt that he required utter silence in order to concentrate upon his game. As he explained, "...It is not so much the mooing of a cow that bothers my game as the thought that a cow might be about to moo."\(^6\)

Colonists, while embracing the aesthetic aspects of Arcadian culture were not sufficiently enamoured to immerse themselves in it. Harry Desmond and Herbert Croly (member of the Cornish colony) wrote an article on country living which was published in The Craftsman in 1915. In it, they stated:

...having once tasted the comfort and culture of the cities, we too find that we can no longer live without elegance. We may be philosophers and poets in our love of the country, in our desire for outdoor freedom, and our appreciation for the land, but when it comes to the actual test, many of us are loath to face rural existence unless we can take with us most of the conveniences and some of the luxuries for which the city has become synonymous. ...Moreover, and this is by no means an afterthought...a home must also fulfill our aesthetic needs. The preceding generations, being more concerned with the practical than with the artistic side of existence, may have been able to tolerate the bare unlovely farmhouses, the barn-like cottages...but we insist on something more. If we are to turn the tide of progress outward from the cities, if we are to seek release from our cramped streets and darkened windows and find health and happiness among the fields and woods and gardens of our own making, then it must be with the assurance that our new house and those of our neighbors not only will be in a beautiful environment but will be beautiful in themselves from an architectural point of view.\(^7\)

Colony landowners looked on their holdings as raw material that might readily be adapted to their favorite permutation of the Arcadian aesthetic. Pagodas, porches, and classical columns were added to New England farmhouse exteriors; entire Italianate villas were constructed.
Sloping orchard land was terraced and planted with Lombardy poplars, native white pines were clipped into hedges, and brightly-colored formal flowerbeds were planted as colonists further refined the Cornish environment.

Another feature of the Cornish setting which made it attractive to artists in the early years of the colony was that raw nature came cheap. Natural beauty combined with inexpensive lodgings proved a combination difficult to resist. Margaret Littell Platt noted that mural painters had difficulty renting rooms in the cities large enough to contain their work. Such rooms, if they even existed, were extremely expensive to rent. In Cornish, according to Margaret Platt,

...rents were practically nothing at all, and if you rented an old farmhouse, you got a barn with it. And nobody charged you for using the barn to paint in. If you used the room for cows or for horses, it would wear the barn and they would have to have charged.... So they (the artists) came because they had mutual purpose and abilities, and needs of space.8

The very economy of the region posed a potential conflict of interest between those seeking a bucolic retreat, and local residents who saw summer people as an economic resource. Weekly advertisements in the Vermont Journal directed at Cornish natives with rooms to let pled "Wanted. Summer board by THOUSANDS of Brooklyn people. Can you take a few?"9 Most of the Cornish artists, jealous of their peace and privacy were reluctant to welcome summering hordes. Solitude was a quality treasured by most of the colonists and many of the local landowners were encouraged to be discriminating if they accepted summer boarders.
Stephen Tracy, one of the local landowners who rented rooms in his farmhouse each summer, was very concerned with the problem of accepting compatible persons as summer boarders, and he wrote colony member William Houston about the issue. Houston responded promptly. In a letter to Tracy dated April 8, 1897, Houston wrote:

Mr. Tracy, My Dearest Sir:

...We are much pleased that you take the interest. It is better for the colony and much better for you to be careful with who we get there. Of course if they are nice people, we could make it pleasant for them, and are pleased to....

Percy MacKaye, an aspiring playwright acquainted with several of the colony members visited Cornish in the spring of 1904. Writing to his wife, he rhapsodized about the setting of the colony and its inhabitants.

My Dearest Girl: [he wrote]

Another lucky Friday and a 13th at that. We have a house for a year, ... though I am bursting with enthusiasm, I'll be modest and simply say that I am very happy about it and feel you will be. This is a splendid...and beautiful country dominated by an august and serene mountain; the people promise to be most winning, simple, and neighborly.

Mr. Shipman (a friend of Hapgood, Southern, Professor Baker, Frazier, and many mutual friends) invited me to his house immediately on my arrival and he and his wife have been charmingly hospitable. I think I have solved our servant problem--also through their kindness. There is another world and another joy to life here in the hills, and I believe it is going to make us over...

The important point is that MacKaye had contacts in the colony; those who did not have professional, familial, or (later) political ties with colony members found it harder to settle in. Brewster Corcoran,
writing for Western New England Magazine in 1913 intimated that the colony had extended its control beyond boarding houses and rental property. "Land is plentiful in Cornish," he wrote, "until the stranger tries to buy."^12

By 1908, the colonists had become as much of a tourist attraction as the setting, much to their collective displeasure; that year, an article in the Springfield Sunday Republican about the Cornish Colony stated:

There is no guidebook to Cornish, no sign upon the winding road to show the way to various homes, no tablet upon the gateposts to tell you who lives in the house beyond the barrier. Cornish does not want that fame. ...He who wishes to see a few of the summer houses can do it in but one way, and that is to hire a team in Windsor, secure a driver who knows the country, and spend an afternoon cruising about over the hills.13

Stephen Parrish on occasion threatened to cultivate poison ivy on his hilltop farm in an effort to frighten away outsiders.14 Robert Barrett's proposed solution was to import African rhinoceri and a small army of fighting ants.15 Dr. Nichols (brother-in-law of Augustus St. Gaudens) went even further. Feeling that the major thoroughfare, Route 12-A passed too close to his house, he had the road moved at considerable expense, thereby achieving a pricey sort of privacy.16

Colony members' efforts to maintain control over the summer population at Cornish were not always successful. The Cornish Colony was not a formally organized institution; therefore its members did not have the advantage of utilizing application procedures as a filter. The
land holdings of colony members were diffused through the countryside; formal art colonies, situated on one parcel of land were more easily fenced and contained. But in the early days of the colony, the social leverage exerted by colonists had considerable impact upon sociable city tourists isolated in a rural New Hampshire region. As Frances Grimes stated in her reminiscences:

Cornish was becoming known. In New York in winter, if one happened to speak of it, the conversation was likely to halt and someone would say, 'Do you spend your summers in Cornish? Tell us about it.' Its reputation was not wholly good; it was said to be a place where strangers were not always treated well, where one was looked over and accepted or rejected on some basis that was not understood; nice people had not been called on; it was said to be some place, but a state of mind as Boston was said to be.17

Artists may have been sensitive to this sort of criticism for they made attempts to justify their exclusiveness in their reminiscences, and to the press. Frances Grimes, recording some of these justifications, wrote:

By the time I came, there was already an old Cornish, the artists who had been brought there by C. C. Beaman and St. Gaudens: Brush, Dewing, Platt, Stephen Parrish, Prellwitz, Adams, Walker, and those who did not stay to make their homes there. Their exclusiveness was not purely artists' snobbery. They wanted to work, and not only did they not want interruptions, they did not want spectators, those people who would ask to visit their studios. That was the complaint made of families who were not artists brought there by Beaman; they would ask to bring their guests to see what was being done, and often in working hours. As I look back, complaint of these kind and hospitable people seems ungrateful, for their attitude was always most respectful, and their desire to please and give the kind of pleasure the artists wanted was never-ending. But then, there were their visitors to please also. It was not only as interruptions that outsiders were feared, but as possibly bringing with
Charles Platt registered his protest in these words: "People come in their automobiles and their carriages, and when you have a little two by four piece of ground you work in yourself, you don't like to have everybody standing around looking at you."19

As these statements have shown, life in the Cornish Colony was valued for its privacy and its remoteness from a certain mainstream crowd as well as for its beauty and economy. Yet, these artists were working people requiring on occasion some contact with the New York art and literary scene. Cornish seemed delightfully remote and rural, but in actuality, the train across the river in Windsor, Vermont provided ready access to the city. Telegraph and telephone sped communications immensely; Stephen Parrish, normally terse when recording observations in his diary waxed almost garrulous describing the marvels of early twentieth century communication. His entry for January 17, 1909 read:

Evening. Had Cortissoz and Shipman to supper. (At ¼ to 9 p.m., Cortissoz was called up by long distance from New York. Edmund Clarence Stedman had just died, and he, Cortissoz, must write an editorial on him to go to press at midnight (New York Tribune). He finished in an hour, then Sturtevant drove to Windsor with it, it was telegraphed to New York and Cortissoz rec'd telegram from the Tribune office at 11:30 p.m. that it was in type! 2 3/4 hours from the time he had commenced to write it.20

In 1913, Cornish New Hampshire served as the summer capitol of the nation when President Woodrow Wilson spent the summer in Winston Churchill's Harlakenden House. Brewster Corcoran, writing that year for the Western New England Magazine noted,
Not for years has the summer capitol been so far from the turmoil of cities and the tinntabulations [sic] of politicians.... Yet after all, it is only in imagination that Cornish is remote. It is less than four hours from Springfield by train; it is accessible by motor over good country roads; and it will be very near everywhere through the rewoven web of wires which centers at Windsor, just across the river.21

But perhaps the most important advantage felt to be derived from colony life was the collaboration between the artists themselves. The Renaissance tradition stressed collaboration between architects and businessmen, between writers, painters, sculptors, and landscape planners, and there were many such links in the Cornish Colony. Winston Churchill had colony member Florence Shinn illustrate his novel Coniston. In addition, he employed the services of playwright Louis Evan Shipman in getting his novel The Crossing adapted for the stage. The advantage to the partnership was that Shipman had theatre contacts as well as considerable talent in the field of theatrical production. In his capacity as stage manager for The Crossing, Shipman negotiated production contracts, secured the services of talented actors and actresses, coordinated the staging and publicity, and successfully steered Churchill's work through the theatrical maws of New York City.22 In turn, Churchill was happy to throw his reputation as one of America's foremost popular novelists behind more academic writers like Percy MacKaye and Herbert Croly, recommending their manuscripts and introducing their work to members of prestigious literary clubs.23

Landscape painter Charles Adams Platt came to Cornish in 1889, at the suggestion of Thomas and Maria Dewing. There, Thomas Dewing introduced Platt to his most important patron, Charles L. Freer, the
oriental art collector, and Freer subsequently became the source of many Platt commissions. Platt had an interest in landscape architecture and architecture itself; at Cornish, he had a unique opportunity to supplement his design skills and learn the craft of building by constructing small, inexpensive summer houses (with the help of experienced New Hampshire craftsmen) for friends in the Cornish Colony. Platt designed and built High Court for Ann Lazarus and his own home in 1890, the Lawrence residence in 1896, the Croly residence in 1897, the H. O. Walker and Smoot residences in 1899, Winston Churchill's Harlakenden House in 1901, Herbert Adam's Hermitage in 1903, and the Slade house in 1904-05. Herbert Croly, editor of the Architectural Record was a supporter and frequent publicist of Platt's early architecture; his Houses for Town and Country written under the pseudonym of William Herbert used Platt's work extensively.

After Platt had established his reputation in Cornish as an architect, he was often called upon for advice concerning garden design and architecture as backdrop in paintings. Kenyon Cox used the view from Platt's hilltop garden as the background setting for a mural, and had Platt draw up the architecture in another mural of his. Platt also assisted sculptors Augustus St. Gaudens, Daniel Chester French, and Herbert Adams with architectural settings (i.e., pedestals) and landscape plans for their public monuments. After Louis and Ellen Shipman were divorced, and she decided to become a landscape architect, she received much encouragement and training from Platt.
Patterns of professional interaction were extended to the social occasions of the colony, which consisted of a fast and furious round of teas, dinners, parties, and house-guests. Many of the social occasions provided opportunities for artists to view and discuss each others' work. Stephen Parrish on November 9, 1907 recorded, "...Evening to MacKayes to dinner (we walked) (the Rublees, Barrett, Littell, Harry Fuller). Percy read his 'lecture' on the drama followed by a general discussion."  

Percy MacKaye, writing from Cornish to his wife Marion in Boston noted, "...this morning, I worked on the 4th act of 'Jeanne'; this afternoon at St. Gaudens and caddied for him in golf and at afternoon tea. ...Tomorrow night at St. Gaudens to dinner and will read him act III of 'Jeanne'!"  

Such meetings of minds and sensibilities were usually stimulating and encouraging sessions for the artists involved. When Maxfield Parrish finished a painting or a mural, he made a regular practice of holding an open house for colony members. In 1901, when he was at the beginning of his career, he must have derived enormous satisfaction from Augustus St. Gaudens' letter of..."
It is always an astonishment to me after all the fine things that have been done, and after all the possibilities of beauty seem to have been exhausted, some men like you will come along and strike a note just as distinctive and just as fine. It is encouraging and stimulating.

Comments were not always as laudatory, as this letter of Homer St. Gaudens to playwright Percy MacKaye shows. Dated January 6, 1909, it read:

Dear Percy,

Thank you many times for the trouble you put into that play, and for an honest opinion. I've been sending it around down Broadway for the last two months, so evidently, your opinion is the general one.

Collaboration between artists in the colony extended even to the works themselves. An article in the New York Sun dated December, 1908 was entitled, "Had Help on Prize Painting: Henry B. Fuller Cheerfully Admits His Indebtedness". It stated:

Since Henry B. Fuller won the Carnegie Prize of $500 for the most meritorious painting submitted at the Winter Exhibition at the National Academy of Design, 'Triumph of Truth over Error', some of the academicians have been excited over a report that the big decorative painting was not altogether the work of Mr. Fuller, but a composite from the brushes of several artists, although signed only by Henry B. Fuller....

Mr. Fuller heard some of these criticisms and objections yesterday, and hastened to admit frankly that 'The Triumph of Truth Over Error' was in part the work of Everett Shinn and William Chadwick, a younger artist less widely known. Furthermore, Mr. Fuller acknowledged his indebtedness to the late Augustus St. Gaudens for encouragement and advice in the preparation of the painting. ...There had been no secret about the help he received from these sources, Mr. Fuller said, and he was somewhat surprised that he had come in for criticism for following a custom recognized among those who paint decorative pictures of having assistants.
Artists in Cornish shared studios, models, and even funds on occasion; certainly this collaborative effort involving intellectual criticism, shared resources, and the furtherance of budding careers was felt to be one of the major advantages of colony life. Augustus St. Gaudens in his Reminiscences mused:

"My first winter in Cornish, I was deeply impressed and delighted by its exhilaration and brillancy, its unexpected joyousness, the sleigh riding, the skating and what-not. I was happy as a child. But without my work, assistants and congenial neighbors, I would not have borne a winter in the cold country. To me, after all, nature, no matter how superb, when it lacks the human element, lacks the real thing."

Thus, Cornish, by virtue of its location provided artists with an inspirational (and inexpensive) setting in which to work and to communicate. Colony members drew sustenance from the landscape, empathizing if they wished with the moral values implicit in the beauty of an Old New England town. And the landscape had the double virtue of being removed from, and yet proximate to the mainstream of the art world, by virtue of its nearness to railroads and telegraph.

Ultimately, however, the attractiveness of the colony setting was to carry the seeds of its own destruction. The colonists could stave off the infiltrations of tourists for only so long. In 1906, Augustus St. Gaudens lamented, "The circle has extended beyond the range of my acquaintance, to say nothing of friendship. The country still retains its beauty, but its secluded charm has been swept away before the rushing automobile, the uniformed flunky, the butler, and the accompanying dress-coat."
Thomas Dewing was regarded by some to be as much a founder of the colony as St. Gaudens. In the early days, he had done much to publicize it to his friends. In 1905, Mr. William Hyde of New York bought the Dewing place; Mr. Dewing, disgruntled with the colony's growing popularity and the ever-encroaching trappings of civilization trekked northwards in search of wilder pastures. Frances Grimes closed her reminiscences of early colony life with this story:

I do not remember the year when Dewing went away—about the beginning of 1900, I think. Too many new people had come; he could not paint there. He had bought a place in Maine away from everyone with a beautiful view of the mountains. One day, he said (to Henry Adams), 'Adams, the place is taking on a bad air. I met men with tennis raquets on the road by my house.', and that was the end of Cornish for him.
CHAPTER V

COLONY INTERACTION WITH THE TOWN OF CORNISH:
THE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

The discussion this far might imply that the colony and its members existed in a rarefied atmosphere, but the fact remains that the colony, as a part of the greater Cornish community, exerted influence upon the town and was influenced by the town in its turn. This give and take relationship was reflected most fully in the economic situation between town and colony. Colonists, in order to maintain their lifestyle, were dependent upon living space, goods, and services available through the townspeople. Town residents took advantage of colony employment, taxes, and economically viable institutions founded by the colonists.

As there was no large inn in the immediate vicinity of Cornish, farmers in the area with ample space in their homes were prevailed upon to take summer boarders in as paying guests. The Frank Johnson family, the Stephen Tracy family, the William Westgate family, and the George Ruggles family among others were members of the Cornish community who found boarding to be a remunerative sideline to the business of farming. The Vermont Journal commented on this trend in September of 1891, stating,

The farmer and his wife who know how can give a bounteous table for $7 a week.... The summer boarder at
$7 a week will pay better than boarding the schoolmarm at $1.75 a week or raising beef...or wool.

Many of the colonists who made a tentative commitment to the area as summer boarders fell in love with the landscape and eventually purchased their own land. But colonists who had been excited by articles such as Arthur Huntingdon Gleason's "New Hampshire: A State for Sale at $10 an Acre" in Country Life in America were doomed to disappointment. In the same issue of the magazine, Gleason admitted "The bargain hunter in search of good ten dollar land need not visit...the Connecticut Valley...for its entire extent north and south, for prices here are steadily high." In the late 1890's when the Lawrence sisters bought property from George Freeman, they paid two hundred dollars an acre for a two-acre plot. Local landowners were canny; sensing a demand, they raised the prices to take advantage of it.

The colony's financial contribution to the Cornish-Plainfield area was strengthened by the fact that annual taxes were exacted with regularity. In the earlier years of the colony, the artists as a group were not wealthy enough to maintain substantial land holdings with extensive improvements on them, but by 1905, the initial colony members had added to their numbers from the ranks of the eminent and the well-to-do. That year, the average tax paid by summer residents was $112.42, as opposed to an average tax of $17.17 paid by townspeople. Mr. William Platt, reminiscing about the colony during the summer of 1980 stated,

The rest of the state was down and out...but this town was prospering because the city folk here were paying high taxes. They've always paid high taxes and they've never
gotten much out of it because their children haven't gone to school here, and the roads aren't really well kept up. My father once said to me 'I don't worry about this. If a man has more than one house, one of the houses is a luxury, and I'm perfectly willing to pay for the luxury of coming to Cornish when I want to.'

Once they owned land, most colony members built homes. As might be expected, the building trades in town boomed. Winston Churchill's house, Harlakenden Hall, cost approximately $10,000 to build. About twenty local men and several local companies were utilized in the project. A few New York craftsmen specializing in details such as oak staining were brought in by architect Charles Platt, but for the most part, the house was raised and constructed by local men.

Platt wrote to Churchill in February of 1899 before construction on the house started, detailing the projected housebuilding costs.

My Dear Mr. Churchill,

I have only heard this morning in reply to my inquiry of the carpenters and masons in Windsor for estimates on your house. I cannot get anything definite out of the people up there; they are willing to guess only and will not bind themselves to any fixed figures. I therefore submit the following estimates based on figures they have given me, and by my own experience on various work I have done in Cornish:

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<thead>
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<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excavation and foundations</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granite base course</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry (outside brickwork)</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumber and carpenter work</td>
<td>$6360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak finish in parlor</td>
<td>$420.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumbing and drainage</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
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<td>Architects fees at 8%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,238.00</strong></td>
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...I put my commission at eight percent. My usual charge for anything under fifteen thousand dollars is ten percent, but on the ground of your being a neighbor,
I make it as low as I can. Let me hear from you as soon as possible. 

Sincerely, 
C. A. Platt

Most of the men employed on the construction of Harlakenden Hall were "jobbers", or those who did odd jobs as the need arose. Ralph Jordan, now one of the oldest residents of Plainfield, considered himself as a farmer who "worked out a good deal" doing odd jobs for colony members or "city people" as they were called. His wife supplemented their income by running a boarding home for summer tourists in the early decades of the twentieth century. Jordan, commenting on the economic relationship between colonists and townspeople said,

The colony was a great thing for this settlement when they were building; they spent a lot of money and there was a lot of work for the local people. Most of them when they were building, they hired men with teams to draw stone and dig dirt and all that, and carpenters to do the building, and lumber to do the building and even beyond that. Good lord, you take Beaman there for instance: he kept ten men working there year round taking care of the cattle, taking care of the teams and working them, hauling wood lumber, and maintaining that farm.7

Jordan's statement indicates that homes once built had to be maintained. Hubert Deming worked for Admiral Folger, one of the later colony members, from 1918 to 1928 when the Admiral died. Deming described his duties in an interview taken during the summer of 1980:

The Admiral had a cottage for his caretaker all furnished, and he had three horses, two cows, and a family flock of chickens and I was to take care of those. He stayed through the summer months and in the winter, he spent his months in Boston at the Algonquin Club. Then he'd come up in April. He'd bring his two maids,
one for cooking and one for doing housework and waiting tables. I looked after the place and garden; did some farming and turned the land over. He had some forty acres there. We had our own wood-lot, and I cut quite a pile in the winters...about twenty cords. Then, we had ice-houses that we filled for the summer. And I'd fill that ice-house with so many hundred cakes of ice I'd cut from the pond down below.8

Guy Hammond was Winston Churchill's caretaker, and during the first two weeks of January 1901, his tasks as recorded in weekly reports to his absent employer were as follows: cutting ice, shovelling snow, cutting timber, siding a shed, taking care of pipes to prevent water from freezing, taking care of the animals, buying supplies for the animals, drawing stone, cleaning brush around the house, sending out bills, and reminding Churchill of bills to be paid. Hammond, feeling rather inundated with work that month suggested to Churchill that another local man, Mr. Hibbard be employed full-time as there would certainly be enough work for him to do.9

The Cornish Colony was famous for its gardens; in the springtime much work had to be done clearing and fertilizing flowerbeds, planting bulbs and annuals, terracing, transplanting, tending and mowing. Stephen Parrish employed a full-time garden helper through most of the year, and at times employed Cornish "jobbers" for extra help in landscaping, hauling, and clearing. One week from his 1898 diary is excerpted here.

April 19, 1898: Harry Bailey clearing up garden below. Taking off mulch and manuring blackberries, gooseberries, and rhubarb the past two days and cutting out the old canes.
April 20, 1898: Finished sowing grass seed on S.W. terrace.
April 21, 1898: Bailey commenced digging holes for trees and shrubs.
April 22, 1898: Alexander brothers here with cart.
   Brought up box and yew tree from Tracy's cellar.
   Took up 6 apple trees from below and set some on wall east and south of workshop. Bailey and
   Alexanders digging holes for trees and shrubs.
April 23, 1898: Bailey digging holes. Large box and
   bale arrived from Shady Hill Nursery in evening
   (box contained shrubs, bale, Poplars Bollea...).
April 26, 1898: Planted out nearly all the shrubs hauled
   yesterday (with Harry Bailey)....
April 27, 1898: Laid myself a low retaining wall north of
   pine tree and filling up with dirt to make a broader
   level on path, Bailey helping. Potted in shrubs: two
   box bushes....

In urban centers, it was customary for even middle class households to employ a domestic servant. This did not necessarily indicate wealth or social status. Even in the earliest years of the colony, most of the colonists had one domestic servant, as well as a man to take care of the grounds. Ellen Maylin’s mother worked as a cook for the Shipmans, starting in 1906. She remembered that the Shipmans

...used to have a cook and a second girl in the kitchen to prepare the vegetables and things like that. They had a waitress; sometimes the waitress would share the downstairs work with the chamber maid from upstairs. Then they always had a governess. And they had a chauffeur, and of course gardeners and people like that. Other houses had more....

Not all domestic help was drawn from the Cornish-Plainfield area. Colony families sometimes brought with them or recruited cooks, domestics, and governesses from urban centers like Boston or New York.

Acculturation to the rural environment often proved difficult for city-bred help. In a three week period, May 25 to June 15 in 1910, Stephen
Parrish tried three times with various degrees of dissatisfaction to recruit a suitable cook. For local residents, employment in colony homes paid well. Marguerite Quimby who started tutoring Maxfield Parrish's children in 1913 had previously been employed at one of the local schoolhouses in a teaching position which paid five dollars a week. Mrs. Parrish offered her twice that sum, a proposition difficult to resist.

Maxfield Parrish also used a good number of the Cornish-Plainfield residents as models. Katherine Philbrick Read modelled for Parrish in 1932 when she was thirteen years of age. She remembered:

...I got five dollars which was a fortune. At the time, I was a janitor in the one-room schoolhouse; I'd get up early and go down to the school and split kindling and build the fire in that big old stove there. And good grief, I only made five dollars in the whole term.

Mrs. Read's father ran the Albion Lang farm. Later on, in the same interview, she generalized about the advantages to be gained from working for city people. Describing her parents, Mrs. Read said:

They worked for the city people...because that's all there was. We didn't have factories and that sort of thing. Everything was subsistence farming.... If you worked for city people...you were well off, because not only did you get your subsistence farming, which is about all you did anyway, but you got so much a month besides. So it was really a great place, especially during the depression, because in the depression, you couldn't sell anything.

Summer colonists patronized local markets and bought goods as well as services from the local people. Colony members expanded the market for locally-grown vegetables, fruits, and dairy products tremen-
dously. And their selectivity in taste brought new commodities to the area. Marguerite Quimby recalled that the introduction of S.S. Pierce food products to the area was due to the sophistication of colony members' palates. Even as early as 1884, Tudbury and Stone's Store in Windsor, Vermont was promoting a select line of merchandise in The Vermont Journal, much of which seemed of dubious use to the Vermont or New Hampshire farmer. Store advertisements stated:

...Summer visitors will find in our store all varieties of fresh fruits, French confectionery, fancy biscuits, tinned and glassed meats, etc. for lunches and picnics. Vacation caps, belts, blouse waists, tennis shoes, Windsor ties, flannel coats, blazers....

Winston Churchill kept a complete set of receipts which survive in the Dartmouth College Library Archives. The business receipts dated between January and December of 1903 record Churchill's patronage of 89 local businesses and individuals providing a near-complete range of services. Churchill preferred to get legal and medical advice outside the state, and most of his family's clothing and motor vehicles were bought elsewhere, but aside from these things, his needs were met locally, and by his choice.

Certain colony members were instrumental in the creation of commercial enterprises and services that proved extremely beneficial to the town. In 1889, Charles C. Beaman, the New York lawyer who founded the colony, established the Hillside Creamery. This creamery and another locally established the year before were widely perceived as economically beneficial to the town. Hubert Deming discoursed on the benefits to be derived from creameries, noting:
The farmers all around town then---most everyone had a few cows. Beaman formed an organization called the Hillside Creamery. The townspeople and the people from Plainfield used to come down there with milk, and the Vermont people used to come across the bridge with their milk. They weighed the milk there, and were paid according to the weight of the milk and the testing of the butterfat.... Beaman found a good market for the cream in New York City. They'd ship it down on the train. So the real advantage of the creamery was that the farmers were assured an income. 20

Beaman also put in a dam and gristmill on the banks of the Blow-Me-Down Brook in Cornish; the mill building was designed by Stanford White of the New York firm McKim, Mead, and White, and it was open for the use of the general public. Beaman and several others of the colony members were interested in farming on a large scale, and used the mill more heavily than did local residents with smaller farms. But the bulk of the business generated by the gristmill was local. 21

Arthur Quimby remembers the gristmill as being "...of real economic benefit to the people here," 22 and for the other reasons than the processing of grain. He explained.

An incidental benefit was ice, because there was a good big holding pond and the ice there would freeze a foot or more thick in the wintertime. And then someone would have the energy to get up a big saw--an up and down saw with huge teeth which could cut this ice into blocks. And then they'd saw in a ways, and with an iron bar sharpened on the end would jam down and snap off a huge chunk of ice. These chunks would be pushed aside onto the frozen surface of the pond. Then my father and others like him would come with a double runner open sled with a ramp. They would slide the ice up onto the sled, secure it with chains, and then take it back up the hill to stock the icehouses.... 23

Charles Platt's bill for ice for the month of January in 1892 came to $18.32. 24 In the days before refrigeration, the stocking of ice-houses for warm weather use was an essential business.
The summer colonists were vitally interested in town road improvement, and raised a great deal of money independently, above and beyond the taxes they paid. James Chadbourne, a member of the Plainfield board of selectmen wrote to A. W. Dean, State Engineer about the use of State appropriations for road improvement. His letter of June 21, 1906 credited the summer colonists, stating:

...The money that has been expended on the main road, which you have doubtless heard about, has mostly been raised by subscription, not by the vote of the town, and this amount largely by non-residents, thereby leaving more instead of less money for the other roads throughout the town. More than this, it seems to me that these people (the summer residents) are entitled to more [say in the appropriations] of the highway money than they get, being heavy tax people, and getting no benefit of the town's money except in highways....

Colonists also contributed to town charities. Stephen Parrish's diary for August 7, 1907 recorded: "Evening. A big entertainment at the town hall, Plainfield. A Café Chairtant (proceeds for the payment of a nurse for needy families in Cornish and Plainfield). The hall crowded with summer colony members and their guests." In the latter years of the 1920's, Ellen Shipman held annual garden parties for the purpose of raising funds for winter relief in Plainfield. Exclusiveness was banished for a day, and many of the homes and grounds of colony members were opened for public perusal, upon payment of a nominal fee. Charity was a sensitive issue, probably because charity was the most explicitly condescending of the economic interactions between town and colony. Such contacts between the two groups were not universally viewed in a favorable light. But generally, the economic interaction between two groups was viewed positively by those concerned, and at
times even encouraged. In 1900, Winston Churchill, colony proponent of the summer tourist industry received the following letter:

Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir:

I want to ask if you know of any city people who would buy a farm and two tenement houses? The property is located one mile south of West Lebanon Village around White River Junction, Vermont.... The farmhouse is a large 2½ story building having 16 rooms, the dining room being a little over 19 feet long. The tenement houses are made of good material and can be remodelled if desired. The farm is a good one, level and easily cultivated. There are two pretty groves, one quite near the house where people could enjoy themselves out of doors. We have free rural mail delivery starting today, long distance telephone at the 'Junction', and of course you know that at White River Junction railroad, facilities are good for going in any direction. The property is owned by two women getting along in years and not in very good health who would rather be off from a farm. ...If you are passing by at any time, we should be glad to have you stop and look at the place.

Very respectfully,
L. Florence Ward 27
West Lebanon, N.W.

When Winston Churchill was in the process of drumming up local support for his senatorial campaign during the summer of 1906, he received a letter from Paul Davidson, the town clerk at Cornish Flat, which stated:

...I for one certainly appreciate the benefits accruing to the town through the coming of the so-called summer residents, not only on account of the very generous treatment the town has received at your hand, but also from the fact that the town has gained a reputation it could have got in no other way. Also an increased valuation, and further in that large sums have been paid and are still being paid for labor. I have often wished that I lived in that part of town that I might avail myself of its opportunities.

As far as your candidacy for senatorial nomination is concerned, you will of course receive the undivided support of the party in this town....
Churchill indeed won, but not without some conflict, bred largely by social and cultural differences between colonists and natives.
The summer colonists, by their own admission were devoted to their work, jealous of their privacy, and not extremely hospitable to outsiders invading their territory. It might therefore be expected that they had little time for involvement in the town's cultural affairs. This, however, was not the case. Colonists helped to found several cultural institutions still extant in the community today, among them the Mothers and Daughters Club in the Cornish-Plainfield area, and the Corbin Park game preserve and Meriden Bird Club in the neighboring town of Meriden. In addition, their financial participation was heavy in select cultural institutions such as town schools, libraries, and theatrical groups.

Why did they bother? Evidence suggests that they saw improvements to the cultural life of the town as improvements of shared space. And many of the artists regarded the introduction of cultural appreciation to the Cornish community as a sort of social responsibility, or personal mission. Kenyon Cox, in his work *Artist and Public* seemed preoccupied with the fact that in denying much of its social responsibility, art had lost much of its public. "True art has always been the expres-
sion by the artist of the ideals of his time and of the world in which he has lived—ideals which were his own because he was a part of that world," Cox proclaimed. Continuing the line of thought, he noted,

A living and healthy art never has existed and never can exist except through the mutual understanding and cooperation of the artist and his public. Art is made for man and has a social function to perform. We have a right to demand that it shall be both human and humane; that it shall show some sympathy in the artist with our thoughts and our feelings; that it shall interpret our ideals to us in that universal language which has grown up in the course of ages.... But mutual understanding implies a duty on the part of the public as well as on the part of the artist, and we must give as well as take. We must be at pains to learn something of the language of the art in which we bid the artist speak. If we would have beauty from him, we must sympathize with his aspiration for beauty. Above all, if we would have him interpret for us our ideals, we must have ideals worthy of such interpretation.

Cornish playwright Percy MacKaye regarded his medium at least potentially as a civic art, feeling that "...it behooves...our leading citizens to realize the educative possibilities of pageantry in providing a fine art for the people." And Winston Churchill, the colony's best-seller novelist hoped that his works would go beyond mere literature to stimulate feelings of moral self-examination in the hearts of the American public.

In actuality, the cultural interaction between the two groups was sometimes a sensitive issue; colonists sought not so much to include themselves in town culture as to elevate it. Some degree of patronism was almost inevitable amongst a group as self-conscious in its aesthetic tastes as the Cornish colonists; as an example, Percy MacKaye, writing
to his wife after a visit to Orford, New Hampshire (about forty miles upstream from Cornish) described his rural surroundings in these words.

This countryside is the real "way back" and after this sojourn, I shall feel that we are near the hub of civilization in Cornish. This is an old-time farmhouse... with its maple sugar, primitive hygiene, hand-woven mats, wretched bad chromos and calendars, and farm odors....

Aesthetic sensibilities indeed differed between the two groups, but colonists in general tried to be sensitive to the town's cultural ways and needs, building upon already-existing cultural interests in the town. It was for this reason that interaction was successful to any degree. The Mothers and Daughters Club developed an aesthetic industry from the local craft of rug-making; the Howard Hart Players took children of Grange Hall dramatists and further refined their talents; colony-instituted library activities bolstered an already-strong local institution.

The Mothers and Daughters Club was founded in 1897 at the suggestion of Mrs. Charles Platt, Mrs. Laura Walker, Miss Frances Arnold, and Mrs. Bullard, all colony members. Mrs. Platt with her family had spent the winter of 1896-97 in Cornish, experiencing feelings of winter-bound claustrophobia for the first time. It was hard to get about in the New Hampshire hill-country during the winters, and days which stretched to months held little more than the promise of routine activities such as cooking, washing, or cleaning. The stated purposes of the club were: "...social and educational advancement, and... charitable purposes..." but the hidden agenda of the organization was to facilitate mingling between town women and colony women by providing
a forum for the two groups to meet and talk. It was decided that
the meetings should be built around topics of common interest such as
childrearing, nutrition, the ideal home, and woman's suffrage. In the
winters when most colony members were absent, letters were sent from
New York to be discussed at the fortnightly meetings.

Some sessions were devoted wholly to entertainment. Lucy
Ruggles Bishop commented in her history of the club:

As the years went on, members of the club were given
some very unusual opportunities. Miss Grace Arnold
and Mrs. Frances Graydon invited the members to after-
noon musicales with talent from New York and other
places. Mrs. Maxfield Parrish also invited the
members to musical presentations held in her big
drawing room. We were invited to teas at other
beautiful summer homes and to garden parties at the
home of Mrs. Ellen Shipman, the landscape architect.
I am sure the most outstanding event for the club was
a reception at Mrs. Shipman's to meet the first
Mrs. Woodrow Wilson and two of her daughters--really
a highlight for the women of a little country village.

For the most part, the club successfully straddled the line
between enthusiasm and commitment on the part of the colony members,
and a patronizing attitude. Marguerite Quimby, an early club member
remembers that the club was instrumental in widening the townspeople's
horizons: "...they'd have the bacteriologists, arctic explorers,
friends of people coming in to talk to us; it was an opportunity the
town couldn't have had in any other way." When asked if women from
town felt comfortable at the Mothers and Daughters Club meetings,
Mrs. Quimby replied, "Oh, I think so, they wouldn't have joined other-
wise. It held a very strong place in the community. In fact, I'd say
that a good majority of the women in the community, say two/thirds were
right in there punching." And indeed, the Club's membership list in 1901 charted 159 members, 135 of which were women from the town of Cornish.

However, a few of the younger women involved in the Club in its early years remember feelings of conflict. Ellen Maylin, interviewed during the summer of 1980 had this to say:

You take the subject of nutrition. They'd be teaching these natives who'd cooked for years and years (while these rich people had probably never cooked in their lives) how to cook certain foods that they knew how to cook anyway. And also they told them what was good for them. Well, I don't suppose the natives knew why orange juice was necessarily good for you, but they knew it didn't do you any harm, and they all liked it so they drank it if they could afford it. ...I say it was lovely--it was a grand idea. But still, underneath, I always had this feeling that they were doing the slum-work in Plainfield.

Despite such feelings (and Mrs. Maylin stressed that these were unvoiced and often unadmitted feelings on the part of the younger generation of Cornish women), the Club was a firmly established community institution from its start. Two years from the date of the Club's inception, Club members were beginning to have dreams of raising funds for the construction of their own building. In 1899, Mrs. Laura Walker, Club president, suggested modifying the rag rugs produced in traditional fashion by towns women, and marketing them in the cities. In 1912, Elizabeth Van Horne of Leslie's Weekly Magazine wrote an article describing the Club's by then thriving rug making industry. The article stated:
When the rug-making industry was first started, the farm wives brought in all the cloth they could find, and this formed the material for the first rugs and carpets the Club made. The 'rags' were torn into strips, sewn together, and woven into balls at the meetings, someone reading aloud while the work was progressing. The material thus prepared was woven into rugs after designs made by Mrs. Henry Oliver Walker of Boston and Mrs. William Houston of Boston.

The first sale of the rugs took place in August, and not only were all the rugs sold readily, but orders were taken for forty more to be finished during the winter. The entire supply of old material in the little village was soon exhausted, and the next rugs were made of an entirely new material.12

The new material chosen for the rugs was white domett which had to be purchased in lots from five hundred to a thousand yards. Thus, the traditional craft of rugmaking, by using scraps of whatever material was available was substantially modified. Modification went beyond materials to the very techniques of production. For the sake of efficiency, there was a consistent effort made to fit the task to the person best adapted to it. Dyeing and weaving on the heavy looms required strength; frailer women could be given the lighter tasks of sewing, bundling, and finishing.13 A modified sort of assembly line for the production of rag rugs was instituted. Elizabeth Van Horne described the process.

It [the domett] is all white and then is dyed to suit the purposes of the designs. It is torn into pieces about five and a half yards long before dyeing so that it may be handled easily. After being dyed, it is done up in bundles, each of which will make enough prepared material for one rug. These bundles are taken to the sewer, who returns them stripped and sewed to the manager of the Club. When a rug is ordered, the manager selects the colors required, and carries the materials to the weaver with the design of the rug ordered. It then goes to the finisher, who looks the rug over on both sides, fastens any loose threads, sews down the ends on the strips which are woven to make the
The new process meant more than a change in purchasing or production methods. It symbolized also a self-conscious change in the rug-makers' view of their craft. Rugs were now beginning to be regarded as aesthetic objects first and foremost, as functional objects secondarily. In keeping with this view, even the designs of the rugs were modified. Traditional rugs were designed with serviceability first in mind. Very seldom were they strictly patterned, as such patterning required time, prior planning, and the availability of sufficient materials in the various colors. The bright colors included in most traditional rug carpets seemed gaudy to many city eyes; Van Horne of Leslie's Magazine explained.

The industry is not one for gain only; it is intended to be part of an artistic education as well, for these country workers are taught all about color schemes, harmonious designs, the use of soft shades, and the avoidance of crude colors harshly combined.15

Mary Marshall, of the Twentieth Century Home magazine expressed similar thoughts about the products of the Mothers and Daughters Club rug industry. She said:

The days of the old rag carpet are not yet over; it is very serviceable and sometimes pretty; but we like the way it has put forth fresh blossoms of more delicate shades, in the little rugs sent out into the world to be seen of men.16

According to Lucy Ruggles Bishop, colony members designed patterns for rugs with such names as "the Autumn Leaf" and "The Daffodil."17
as well as publicizing the industry to their city friends and holding sales of the Cornish-produced rugs in their town houses during the winters. The Leslie's Weekly Magazine article stated:

People who patronize the Club's industry often send samples of wallpaper or furniture coverings to be matched in color, or designs in the rugs are ordered, and this is done very satisfactorily for the Club numbers among its members some of the most artistic people from the great cities, and designers of great skill....

The rugs produced in the heyday of the industry were exhibited all over the eastern seaboard, and as far west as Chicago. In the first year of the operation, two hundred rugs were sold, and in the second year three hundred. The sales from this second year alone raised over one thousand dollars, which was put towards the building of a one-room clubhouse.

This clubhouse (still standing today) was truly a cooperative effort between the colony and the town. The land on which the clubhouse sat was given by Mr. Curtis Lewin of the town of Cornish, and Charles Platt designed the building. Both townspeople and colony people donated time, labor and materials for the building; Winston Churchill, for example, donated the oak floors, while George Ruggles donated ten dollars worth of his time supervising the labor force. All told, the donations reached a total of $147.00 at a time when most townspeople made one or two dollars a day. The rest of the money came from the Club's coffers.
The clubhouse, when finished, contained a small library, a sewing machine, piano, and several sets of stereoscopes. It was opened one day a week each winter for discussion, sociables, quiet reading, and charitable work for the needy families of Plainfield. Gradually, as the years passed, and the summer colonists stopped coming to Cornish, the Mothers and Daughters Club became assimilated into town culture, so that today, it is very much regarded as a town club, along with the grange and the church.

Another major cultural interest of the Cornish colony was wildlife preservation. In January of 1905, Augustus St. Gaudens wrote to a new apprentice sculptor, explaining some of the unwritten codes of the colony. "...Another matter that is important and that we of the colony are particularly cranky about is that there shall be no shooting," St. Gaudens wrote, stressing that "all the colony" were unanimous in wanting to protect wildlife. Conservation of wildlife and natural resources management were trends that were to gain full steam in the first two decades of the twentieth century with the ascendancy of the Progressive movement. But the roots of these trends lay deeper, in the nostalgic, back-to-the-soil Arcadian movement, drawing the colonists to Cornish in the 1880's.

Austin Corbin was among the first of the wildlife preservationists. Born in Newport, New Hampshire (15 miles southeast of Cornish), Corbin was a native son turned railroad tycoon, who gave up his business to retire to his native hills with his millions in 1886. It was his wish to create a wildlife preserve, and with characteristic determination, he
set about acquiring 22,000 acres from local farmers in Croydon, and
Cornish flat. The game introduced into the park in 1890 included
thirty buffalo, 140 deer, thirty-five buffalo, 135 elk, fourteen wild
boar, a number of Himalayan goats, and six antelope. 23

In 1904, Corbin brought a young newspaper reporter named Ernest
Harold Baynes to live in the park and to study and publicize its wild-
life. Baynes quickly became the spokesperson of a national fundraising
campaign to save America's bison, and he spent much of his time in
Washington and on a hectic lecture circuit. But Ernest Harold Baynes
was a person who took his local responsibilities quite seriously.
Starting with a group of local high school youngsters from the Kimball
Union Academy in Meriden, he founded the Meriden Bird Club in 1910, and
soon afterwards acquired the donation of a 32-acre farm which he used
as a bird sanctuary. A number of adults, some of whom were members of
the Cornish colony became interested in the cause of bird protection,
and soon, bird baths and bird feeding stations began to proliferate.
By the second decade of the twentieth century Sargents Handbook on New
England Towns was describing Meriden as "the bird village." Its des-
cription of the town is excerpted here.

It was Ernest Harold Baynes who put Meriden on the
map.... He is just one bundle of energy and when he
goes out to protect the birds, ...ordinary humans have
got to watch out. He settled down in Meriden to study
the wild (fenced in) animals in Corbin Park, and it
wasn't long before he was driving a team of buffalo in
harness, kept a timber wolf as a travelling companion,
and kept a wild boar (a German one too) in the parlor.
Then he turned his hand to the citizens of the village
who had lived in the hills for two centuries wholly
unobservant of birds except when they went gunning.
It took him less than a year to tame them so that he
had them tramping in and out in hard winter to feed
some tomtit at the corner of the pasture. In five years, the birds of Meriden have become so patronized that not one of them would think of working for a living. They expect to be bathed and fed by the citizens.... These birds even have a thirty-acre park of their own.... In the park are the most luxurious bathtubs, such as not even a sybaritic millionaire would venture to require. One of them, Baynes boasts in his modest way, is a monolith weighing five tons, and another of bronze was sculpted by Mrs. Louis St. Gaudens in commemoration of the bird masque 'Sanctuary' first performed there in 1913....

For a time, "bird fever" ran rampant in the area, to the extent that bird zealots petitioned the Plainfield Board of Selectmen at town meeting one year with the proposal that neighborhood cats be licenced, belled, and restrained. (Town records show that the proponents were hooted off the floor.) "Bird fever" never quite died in the region; the Meriden Bird Club is still in existence today and has significance as an institution of mostly local membership, founded by an outsider. Thanks to the Cornish colony members, the Meriden Bird Club took on national significance. The masque "Sanctuary" was written by Cornish playwright Percy MacKaye and performed in 1913 with President Woodrow Wilson's daughters and assorted colony members taking the major roles. This judicious incorporation of presidential family members into the play assured Baynes and MacKaye of an audience; the play and what it stood for was written up in the national press in short order.

Drama was a cultural interest shared by colony members and townspeople alike. Colony theatrical productions ranged from impromptu parlor games such as charades and living pictures performed around a living room hearth, to the formal and quite spectacular production created by the colony to honor Augustus St. Gaudens on the occasion of
the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the colony. On this occasion, Percy MacKaye and Louis Shipman together wrote the script for "A Masque of Ours", Harry Fuller, Maxfield Parrish and Louis St. Gaudens collaborated on the set, diaphanous costumes were tailored by colony wives, and music under the direction of Arthur Whiting was performed by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra hidden behind pine trees at sunset.

Townspeople were involved in dramatic productions through the grange and later through the Mothers and Daughters Club; they won many state prizes. William Howard Hart was a colony member quite interested in theatre, and in the local productions put on in the town hall. Lucy Ruggles Bishop described Hart as a "...theatre enthusiast who was always interested in our home talent plays. In fact," she continued,

...the whole Cornish colony turned out in full force whenever we put on a play in the town hall. So in 1920 Mr. Hart gave to the town a complete stage setting with beautiful scenery of all kinds to be set up in the town hall. He had a complete stage lighting system [put in] which we were told at the time was the best this side of Boston. All through the installation of the tremendous gift to the town, Mr. Hart was in constant contact with the President of the Club and her officers to get the most suitable and versatile scenery that he could find for our use. Later, Mr. Maxfield Parrish complemented this by painting a beautiful backdrop of Ascutney Mountain.26

The set provided a great impetus for theatrically oriented groups to perform. A children's theatrical group known as the Howard Hart Players was founded in the late 1930's by Margaret Littell Platt, a second-generation colony member, and by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Quimby, both of the town. The third generation of colony children mingled with
town children in this organized setting, and for years, plays and musi-
cals were performed by these children in a wooded outdoor theatre on
the Herbert Adams property.

In addition to founding cultural organizations, select members
of the colony worked to improve existing ones. The Cornish-Plainfield
area had been educationally involved from the early years of the nine-
teenth century. Kimball Union Academy established in 1813 had done m uch
to educate the young men and women of the area on a secondary school
level. Interest in educational facilities such as libraries had been
strong in the area since the 1830's when a circulating library for adults
under the name of the "Cornish Social Library" was maintained in town.
This was followed by a Sunday school library, established in 1861, a
free library established in 1894, and another free library, the Stowell
Free Library established by the bequest of a local citizen in 1909.

It is not at all surprising that colony members supported the
town library, given Kenyon Cox's statements in Artist and Public.
Robert Barrett, heir to a roofing fortune was one of the later colony
members; his wife Katherine served as joint librarian at the Stowell
Free Library for many years. She and her husband donated books and
periodicals in abundance; the 1914 town report records 889 volumes added
to the library shelves that year. The Barretts obtained and supported
a book wagon which managed to reach most of the children in outlying
areas of town, recruited colony members for library-sponsored musicales
and entertainments, and supplied the ten district schools with books
needed for reading classes. However, the Barretts were a little on the
progressive side for the tastes of the people of Cornish Flat. Both Barretts were health faddists who wore as little clothing as possible, lived in a glass house without cooking facilities on the top of a hill, and had food (cooked for them by a farmer's wife) sent up the hill to them by donkey every day. Yet they were very aware of the cultural gulf between colony people and natives, and tried in their progressive way to bridge it. In 1913, before the large-scale production of Percy MacKaye's 'Sanctuary' Katherine Barrett wrote to him, saying,

...I have an idea which I wish to present to you...I want the bird department and the dramatic department of the Library Club to join in giving out of doors at Cornish Flat a somewhat adapted form of "Sanctuary", the proceeds to be divided between the Bird Club and the Library. If Arvia [one of the MacKaye children] could do the dryad, ...Rob thinks that would get dancing in without making the Cornish Flattites commit deadly sin. ...With Robin and Arvia [both MacKaye children] in the cast, others would be inspired; the gap between natives and colonials would begin to be crossed, and Cornish Flat would wake up about birds....

The Barretts in their own minds were sincerely interested in town affairs, yet it is easy enough to see how townspeople might have construed a patronizing attitude from their actions. Town residents were willing to tolerate a certain amount of cultural difference in colonists (who after all were beneficial to the town's economy); the Barretts stood close to that boundary of cultural tolerance. Their association with the Stowell Free Library ended rather calamitously when one of the library trustees objected strenuously when one of the library trustees objected strenuously to a donated library volume. After the incident, the Barrett house was vandalized repeatedly, and soon afterwards, they sold their land and moved elsewhere.
Points of cultural contact between the two groups often originated with children's activities, as has been shown by the past few examples. Many of the colony people took a great interest in the local schools although they did not as a rule send their own children there. The Barretts, for example, financed hot lunches in the south Cornish schools, providing musical instruction and various graphic exhibits there as well. Mrs. Lydia Parrish, wife of Maxfield Parrish, donated books for the schools, and set up the first 4-H club in the area. Howard Hart refurnished one of the district schools, replacing the long benches with individual desks and seats and replacing the water dipper at the pump with individual cups for each child to drink from.

Town children who showed evidence of musical, artistic, or literacy talent were encouraged by the summer colonists. Harry Thrasher, a local youth, was taken on by Augustus St. Gaudens as an assistant. Marguerite Quimby was encouraged by Stephen and Lydia Parrish to develop her voice. And Arthur Quimby, her husband, felt that his musical and intellectual talents were furthered in many ways by the colony residents. William Taylor, a painter who bought land from Quimby's father had a wife who had been trained as a pianist. She took an interest in the young Quimby: "...when she went back to Wellesley in the wintertime, she would annotate pieces of music and send them to me with directions, fingering, and that sort of thing," Quimby recalled. The Barretts on occasion took local youngsters with them on mountain climbing expeditions to the Rockies, and Arthur Quimby remembers that Robert Barrett "...used to take us out on a sunlit evening on the southside of the hill and talk about the stars, the universe...."
However, the cultural differences between the two groups were profound, and a potential source of serious conflict. Those differences were tangibly expressed in the styles of architecture embraced by each group. Colonists for the most part chose the Italian villa style with its elaborate formal gardens when building their homes, at times disparaging the colonial farmhouses scattered over the Cornish countryside. Augustus St. Gaudens characterized the Federal style New England tavern he eventually bought as "...bleak, austere, forbidding, without a trace of charm." Continuing his diatribe against the Colonial style, St. Gaudens said of his house:

The longer I stayed in it, the more its Puritan austerity irritated me until at last, I begged my friend Mr. George Fletcher Babb, the architect, 'For mercy's sake, make this house smile, or I shall clear out and go elsewhere.'

Babb made the St. Gaudens house more Mediterranean in flavor, adding to its exterior a pergola with large ionic columns. St. Gaudens devised a wide terrace for the sloping field around the house, eventually planting a garden. The hybrid result was described by one colony wag as resembling "...an austere, upright New England farmer with a new set of false teeth."

In 1907, the Suburban House number of Herbert Croly's Architectural Record denounced the typical New England farm setting in these words:

These farmhouses, as we all know were frequently in themselves well-proportioned little buildings...; but whether from poverty, from the lack of proper educational influences, or from sheer insensibility, the farmer rarely made any attempt to give his neat little
house the advantage of the proper setting. At its best, the New England farmhouse was nothing more than tidy; and the planting in its vicinity never consisted of anything more than a few trees, a lilac or two, and occasionally, a border of annual flowers. The effect is usually so bare and arid that one feels like weeping at such widespread neglect of the decent comeliness of domestic life.\textsuperscript{39}

The Cornish setting was an important backdrop for colony activities. Cornish sculptors thought the environment an appropriate setting for their work; painters such as Maxfield Parrish and Kenyon Cox incorporated the landscape into their paintings; landscape architects Ellen Shipman and Rose Standish Nichols used the colony setting as a training ground for the development of their respective arts. For these people, the total environment was of utmost concern; substandard elements in their landscape would have to be modified.

Colonists of a crusading nature felt that gardens could be adapted to anyone's situation in life, especially if they improved the look of Cornish Village. In 1928, Mrs. Ellen Shipman, using the Mothers and Daughters Club as forum for introducing gardening to the townspeople, established a gardens contest. She offered prizes of ten, fifteen and twenty-five dollars for the best looking flowerbeds that could be seen from the road through Plainfield and Cornish. Mrs. Shipman showed slides at the Club to suggest her ideas to club members, and before many years had passed, lawns were mowed, white picket fences and hedges were installed, and brightly colored flowers nodded pleasantly amidst the greens.\textsuperscript{40}
The cultural relations between town and colony, like the economic relations were multifaceted in nature. Unlike the economic situation with its balanced give and take relationship between the two groups, impetus for "enrichment" in the cultural sphere was weighted heavily on the side of the colony. Culture was the colony's professed business, and colonists understandably thought of themselves as eminently qualified to direct the creation of a cultural aesthetic. Issues of patronism and patronage lurked not too far beneath the surface of the cultural relationship between town and colony: resentment indeed flared in a few instances. That more conflict did not surface is a tribute to both groups, their openness to each others' respective needs and abilities, and (as will be seen) their social distance from one another.
CHAPTER VII

COLONY INTERACTION WITH THE TOWN OF CORNISH:

LIFESTYLE AND SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS

Harpers Magazine editor Donald G. Mitchell, writing of his own Arcadian experiences in 1894 warned:

If a man perspires largely in a cornfield on a dusty day, and washes hastily in the horsetrough, and eats in shirtsleeves that date their cleanliness three days back, and loves fat pork and cabbage 'neat', he will not prove the Arcadian companion at dinner,”

further admitting that “...a long day of close fieldwork leaves one in a very unfit mood for appreciative study of either poetry or the natural sciences.”

Stephen Parrish left a complete record in his diaries of every social occasion his household participated in. Using the Parrish diaries as an index of his social interaction, one finds that out of 129 social affairs spread through the summer of 1900, two of them involved interaction with town families; one was a tea, another was an afternoon call.

The Parrish diaries were symptomatic of the social interaction between town and colony. Unlike the areas of cultural and economic interaction, the instances of social contact between the two groups were few and far between. Successful interaction seemingly was influenced by balanced, inter-group exchange. In the social sphere, feelings and perceptions
were involved; there was no tangible cover of mutuality through exchange of anything but domestic service. And domestic service by its very definition was a stratified, non-equal sort of inter-group exchange.

Differences in lifestyle contributed to social isolation between the groups. The very rhythm of life differed profoundly. Farm people were up at dawn to milk the cows and put them out to pasture, and done with their chores by nine o'clock in the evening. Colony members worked late into the afternoons and early evenings, taking full advantage of summer sunlight; social events in the colony often stretched past midnight, into the early hours of the morning. Literary colonists worked late into the night; evening breezes were felt to be conducive to literary output. On September 12, 1916, Witter Bynner and Barry Faulkner left his note on the door of Percy MacKayes studio:

2:15 AM:

Walking over the hills, we thought you might still be writing, or soaking up the moonlight. We have talked here five minutes anyway--and are now off again, warm of heart and cold of foot.

Colony people, especially in the later years of the colony, had more time for leisureed activities than did the townspeople; farming in the summer was a full-time job, leaving little time for leisure and social activity.

Even in the winters, when St. Gaudens built his famous toboggan slides, country people hadn't the time to enjoy them. The children who attended the country school down the road from the St. Gaudens estate didn't have time either; "They all had farm chores," Margaret Platt recalled. "When St. Gaudens' assistants quit work, they might have had to feed a few horses, but they didn't have to milk twelve cows."
Frances Grimes, one of St. Gaudens' assistants boarded with the Westgates, and remembered looking forward to her evenings at the farmhouse.

When we returned in the evening to the farmhouse [she reminisced] we had the news of the day. There was a new calf to be looked at, the shepherd dog had caught a woodchuck in the stone wall in the upper mowing, Reed's cow had been in the garden again, one of the cats had come home with torn ears from a contest with the ugly tom of the neighborhood, we were to have the first peas of the new season for supper..."5

But there was separation between the boarders at the Westgates, and the family. Arthur Quimby (a Westgate grandson) recalled:

They did not eat with us. They ate in a separate room. We always ate in the kitchen--nobody would have thought of eating anywhere else because it was the only room that was warm all winter. They used what was called the dining room separately. So our family normally ate supper around five o'clock in the afternoon, because after that, my father and grandfather had to do the chores, had to do all the milking. ...The procedure was for the family to eat about five o'clock then go out to the barn and do all the work while my mother and grandmother fed the boarders.6

Other differences in group lifestyles proliferated. Very few of the summer colonists were church-goers. When colony activities such as marriages and funerals required a church, the colonists preferred the Episcopalian Church in Windsor to the Baptist and Congregational Churches of Cornish and Plainfield. "Ungodly--very ungodly," stated Marguerite Quimby, describing the group.7

Then there was the question of morals among certain artists. Alice Butler of Windsor who posed for Augustus St. Gaudens' "Victory" statue was puritanical in her upbringing and agreed to pose on the con-
dition that she would always be fully clothed. A compromise was finally effected when Frances Grimes agreed to sew pieces of cambric together, and then drape them around Miss Butler to resemble Greek classical garb. Marguerite Quimby recalled being a prim and proper seventeen-year-old charged with tutoring Maxfield Parrish's two boys. "And he [Maxfield Parrish] would come every morning and get me in his car and he'd say 'Let's go off, shall we? Let's go off and look at trees today,' Mrs. Quimby remembered. "And I'd be thinking, 'Oh! I mustn't let that man get forward like that!'"

Mrs. Wurlein, a sugar heiress from New Orleans who came to Cornish every year "for a rest" smoked cigarettes long before it was considered proper for a woman to do so. Ellen Maylin, serving as a chambermaid in the Wurlein household, was amazed the first time Mrs. Wurlein lit up. She recalled that her employer told her, "You don't want to be frightened now, Ellen, nor think anything about it. Before long, you'll see lots of women doing this."

Colony people had automobiles long before anyone else in town did. Juliette Rublee, part-heiress to a roofing fortune was a flamboyant character; Ellen Maylin remembered that she drove recklessly around town in her automobile wearing big floppy hats and ill-matched clothes, a menace to livestock and townsfolk alike. Winston Churchill was a far more responsible driver, but even he had automotive mishaps; the Vermont Journal of October 3, 1903 reported the following incident in Hartland, Vermont.
Honorable Winston Churchill of Cornish passed through town with his automobile today. When near the Methodist Church, Mr. Churchill saw a team coming and at once stopped his machine without being asked to do so. Byron French was with the team, but the horse was frightened, started up the sand bank, tipped over the carriage, and ran away. Mr. French received a few bruises, and his wagon was smashed. Mr. Churchill offered to pay for damages although no law was violated.12

Differences in childrearing procedures maintained the social gap between town and colony. Colony members brought up their children in ways which seemed strange if not actually scandalous to townspeople. Many of the colony children were in the habit of posing nude for their artistic parents. Colony children's activities were not segregated by sex; girls swam, rode, played baseball alongside their brothers and other boys with very little adult supervision.

Margaret Littell Platt, recalling her colony childhood said,

My brother had a bicycle and I had a small pony that could be driven or ridden, and I can remember feeling at the age of eleven that I was absolutely free to come and go as I wished; I was sort of the boss of my own self. ...I used to see Julia Bryant, but she was kept at home by her mother most often. When she did get out to play, jumping over fences and stone walls and rushing in and out of brooks and things were out of the question. She was very properly brought up. I'm sure her parents were puzzled by the fact that we were allowed to go off riding on the pony and nobody knew when we were going to be home, but we had a general rule and that was 'be home before dark'. ...I think the town girls were chaperoned in a way that we weren't. And I know that a lot of the things I did like playing baseball they would have considered a waste of time.13

The very idea that children were free in the summers to play was quite foreign to townspeople; children on the farms were definitely a part of the work force.
Ellen Maylin recalled that as the colony children began to grow up, there were certain discipline problems.

I heard of many wild parties: ...drunken parties, and parties with boys and girls going skinny-dipping and so forth--things we'd never even heard of in those days, but they did it. And when the first cars came around, they had a lot of accidents, because they were drunk drivers. So I guess it took up a lot of their mothers' time, keeping things quiet.14

Land-use conflicts between colonists and natives were among the most verbalized conflicts of any between the two groups, mainly because these conflicts dealt with a tangible substance. For Cornish natives, land was economy, both in terms of its fertility, and in terms of its appeal to summer visitors and wealthy year-round residents. For the artists, the Cornish landscape was aesthetic first and foremost, and only secondarily of economic value. The very fact that colonists could afford to down-play the economic benefits of their holdings in favor of aesthetic benefits spoke of profound economic, cultural, and social differences between the groups.

On occasion when colony and native views regarding land use differed, colonists used their lobbying power as a group of economic significance. In 1902, John Freeman proposed having a bridge put across the river from Plainfield to Hartland. The proposed bridge would increase land values and bring more traffic through Plainfield. Admiral Folger opposed the building of the bridge, and cited many of his reasons in a letter to Winston Churchill. Folger wrote:
...It seems that our interests as colonists are opposed to the bridge. We are a very exclusive set at present, owning all the desirable farms...and able in a measure to retain their exclusiveness. The members of the colony settled in Cornish to get away from the asphaltum and all things urban, and anything in the way of trolley or bridge seems to me entirely opposed to every element of our precious isolation. We do not want our property to become more valuable as we have no idea of selling. Neither do we wish to pay more taxes, and Brother Josiah Davis, the tax gatherer is quick to seize every chance to enlarge his village fund.

John Freeman thinks he will live to see his land lying on each side of the (proposed) bridge road cut into one-acre lots, and the colony become a town down his and your way. I can imagine you finding this a horror to contemplate as you are his nearest neighbor.

...Freeman said to me common land would be assessed for the building of the bridge, as would Plainfield and Hartland in proportion to property holdings--in other words, the colony would build it and the colony would maintain it. ...I think we should unite upon a bridge policy as we unite upon a trolley policy--or any other plan of action which will tend to perpetuate the exclusion of the summer trippers or intending immigrants, other than those brought here--frankly--by ourselves.15

In a postscript to this letter, Folger noted that the Cornish farmers "...obviously want a bridge if we will pay for it--but I think we have pushed that sort of charity far enough."16

At times, the colony desire for solitude conflicted with and eclipsed efforts to help the townspeople of Cornish. Mrs. Shipman's garden contest aroused some hard feelings. Years before, colony member Albion Lang had offered to supply the town of Plainfield with running water from his hill spring. The gravity-fed system required that the pipes be laid in a straight line from the Lang property to the town below, and this line went through the Shipman properties. When Lang
approached Shipman about allowing a right-of-way through his property for repairs on the pipes, Shipman refused it. The first year's winner of the garden contest was Mrs. Henry Daniels, whose husband had a good spring on their property. Feeling that running water gave her an unfair advantage over other gardeners, Mrs. Daniels declined the prize. 17

Lifestyle differences, combined with the colonists' desire for solitude limited social interaction between the town and the colony. But perhaps the most important inhibitor of sociability between the groups was the fact that many of the townspeople were adding to their incomes by serving in colony households. At no time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was it considered proper to socialize with one's help.

Marguerite Quimby was one of the young townspeople with musical talent. She frequently was asked to perform at colony soirées and counted several of the colony members as mentors, if not personal friends. She worked her way through college by tutoring colony children in the summers, and noted that "...it was very important to keep your own place and dignity if you did work, so it was always fixed up to be a 'help'. It wasn't a job, it was a kindness you were doing for somebody else." 18

The problem of course for a townsperson who took up employ with the colony was that he or she had to abide by the colonists' standards. A Cornish-born caretaker on a city estate whose family had been in the farming business for generations might be told with all seriousness by
his city-bred employer that the farming methods he employed were out­
omed. Hubert Deming, caretaker for Admiral Folger's estate had many
such experiences with his employer and found them quite galling. "He
wanted to inform me of everything to be done--the garden, how to plant
it; you'd think I was a child," explained Hubert Deming. "...Then of
course he knew nothing about farming. He always wanted to come out and
hoe in the morning, work around where I was. He was more of a hindrance
than a help, but he called it 'helping me hoe.'"

At one point, the Admiral accused Deming of taking "the lazy
man's way" of growing potatoes, because he neglected to cultivate them
every morning. Deming responded by calling his method "economy of
production" but the Admiral would have none of that. Insisting that he
plant two rows of potatoes himself, the Admiral proceeded to cultivate
them every day. Deming said nothing, and cultivated his potatoes
three or four times that summer, adding fertilizer when he cultivated.
It may or may not have been oversight, but somehow, Deming neglected
to inform the Admiral that fertilizing was part of the process of
growing potatoes.

"So we came to the digging," Deming related with obvious
pleasure,

I took mine out, and they were nice, beautiful
potatoes, all well grown. We dug out his... and
they were little things, 'bout the size of my
thumb, none of them worth picking up. And I
didn't say anything until he got over it, then I
says 'Well, Admiral, what do you think of your
system of raising potatoes as against my system?'
And he never opened his mouth; shouldered his hoe
and went up to his house."
Some of the colonists at least were sensitive to the fact that there was a "native" point of view with regards to the colony.

Percy MacKay, writing to Marion MacKay about the mechanics of introducing a new caretaker to the property, instructed:

...if Charlie could arrange to spend Monday night at Will Tracy's, it would be a good solution, for then he would be near enough to walk up and explain to James about the stable, etc., get his cheque from me, and then leave, and not have time to carry the 'native' point of view to the newcomers....

Ellen Maylin's mother came to Plainfield in 1905 as a cook for Mr. and Mrs. Louis Shipman. Mrs. Maylin was schooled with the Shipman children, tutored by the Shipman's governess, and participated in the social life of the colony children. She was taught manners, deportment and grace as well as art appreciation, and felt very comfortable with the colony children.

As I grew up, [Mrs. Maylin recalled] I was not allowed to work for these rich people. My mother wouldn't allow me to work because you see, I was friendly with them and with all their children. I did go waiting tables for Mrs. Winston Churchill one evening. She was giving a party for her sons, and they had invited friends their age, naturally, so when I went in to wait on tables, those boys and girls there all knew me and talked with me. Mrs. Churchill waited until I went back out into the kitchen. She came out after me and she spoke very harshly to me and told me that I was not supposed to talk to the guests when I was waiting tables. And I can remember turning right around and saying, 'Mrs. Churchill, those people are my friends, and when my friends speak to me, I answer them.' 'Well you're not supposed to do that here,' she said. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm done,' and I took my little apron and cap off and walked home.

In some instances, colony members were interested in furthering the social welfare of the town without participating in it directly.
Ellen Maylin recalled a large barn on colony property which was made into a dance hall with good hardwood floors. Every month dances were held and refreshments served for the help. "But even though they were nice to the natives, they really weren't social at all," Mrs. Maylin explained. "There weren't any of the rich people who would go to the dances, the parties up there."  

Speaking of the town today, Mrs. Maylin noted,

I think there's a much better feeling in town, now that we have gotten rid of some of these rich people. We natives are much more close together, now that we have the feeling we're on our own level. The people who have bought up those big houses are the same class of people we are. They don't have any servants. They do their own cooking, their own gardening, their own childrearing and so forth just like we do.

Arthur and Marguerite Quimby were some of the few who bridged the social gap between town and colony. Encouraged by colony members, Arthur Quimby developed his musical abilities, won a scholarship to Harvard, and eventually went on to become director of the Cleveland School of Music. Marguerite Quimby worked her way through Smith College by tutoring Colony children. The Quimbys now count the second generation of the Platt and Littell families among their close friends. Describing their friendship, Arthur Quimby said, "We had things in common we could talk about. We were not in two different worlds. And then, the Littells and the Platts came to make their home here year-round, so we really are one now in the sense of being townspeople."  

Marguerite Quimby and Margaret Platt together founded the Howard Hart Players for the children of Cornish; yet even Marguerite Quimby recalled feeling
socially separate from the colony in her youth. She remembered:

...My mother's sister was a college university teacher, a professor and she heard Mrs. Shipman one time discussing me. She was very upset about it, because Mrs. Shipman said, 'Yes, she's a remarkable girl. There's no accounting for it.' ...Then another time, up at one of the Parrish concerts, she heard one of Mr. Churchill's friends say, 'Is she married?' and somebody said, 'I suppose so, being a native.' ...Natives married young, that was the idea.26

When Winston Churchill ran for the political position of representative to the state legislature the quality of his social interaction with townspeople became of the utmost importance. George Fairbanks, a fellow member of the IOOF Lodge in Windsor and a political force in the Cornish area tried hard to create a favorable impression of Churchill among Churchill's potential constituents, arranging small, informal meetings where both could meet and talk. Fairbanks felt it necessary to qualify the quality of the proposed interaction. In a letter to Churchill, he stated:

...I do not wish you to think from what I have said that any of us think ...it would be wise to convince the people that you consider that we stand anywhere in the social position that you do, but in order for you to get the votes of a certain class of people, it will be necessary to show them that you take an interest in them. I do not think that this number can change the result, but it will be better for you, myself, and the party to have the republican vote as full and even as possible.

Yours respectfully,
George E. Fairbanks. 27

Thus, the pattern set by town and colony in the social sphere was largely one of noninteraction. The second generations of both groups kept to their own kind for the most part, and as they grew up, they
married among their own kind. Later, when the Depression struck, and the large summer homes became impractical to maintain, most of the colony children who had spent their summers in Cornish, sold the family homes and drifted back to the cities. There was very little left in the social sense to bind them to Cornish at all.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the United States in 1904 after a long sojourn in Europe, Henry James was impressed and disquieted at the same time by a seeming affinity between the New Hampshire mountain landscape and his own classically pastoral ideal.

Why was the whole connotation so delicately Arcadian, like that of the Arcadia of an old tapestry, an old legend, an old love story in fifteen volumes? ...Why...did all the woodwalks and nestled nooks and shallow carpeted dells, why did...the outlooks to purple crag and blue horizon insist on referring themselves to the idyllic type in all its purity?

In attempting to answer this question, James postulated that perhaps the landscape evoked because it did not bear

...the burden of too much history. The history was there in its degree and one came upon it on sunny afternoons in the form of the classic abandoned farm of the rude forefather who had lost patience with his fate. These scenes of old hard New England effort, defeated by the soil and reclaimed by nature and time...-these seemed the only notes to interfere in their meagerness with the queer other, the larger eloquence that one kept reading into the picture.

The New Hampshire landscape, lacking for the most part tangible evidence of human occupation stimulated James' mind, bringing long-held associations to the fore of his consciousness. James was not seeing the
land with fresh eyes, but with "...the sweet shock of belated recognition." 3

The colonists too brought pre-conditioned social, cultural, and intellectual values with them. For the most part they embraced European cosmopolitan principles as models for structuring their existence at Cornish. Yet somewhat ironically, many of the colonists thought of themselves as part of a progressive movement in art, in literature, and in politics. Progressivism in part was a reaction engendered by the late nineteenth century industrial system; it was thought that insensitivity and greed bred of large urban centers and cultural heterogeneity was seriously eroding American morals and taste. Part of the solution to this problem required going back to the roots of the American democratic system and abstracting the values which had made the nation great. American artists, as self-appointed arbiters of American taste, were concerned philosophically with creating a distinctly American art. It therefore made sense to create that art in rural New England, the stronghold of American individualism and free enterprise.

Such idealism was bolstered (if not fostered) by economic reality. Rural New England was economically moribund. New England farms had lost the agricultural battle to the large scale farms in the west, land was for sale at economical prices, and summer boarders were welcomed for the income they brought to the state. Economic decline in the upper New England region had been accompanied by a population decline; artists summering in the region found a physically beautiful setting with wide
open spaces in which to work and contemplate. The Cornish environment allowed artists (who had felt lost and insignificant as a group in urban centers) to come together as a group of individuals to collaborate with and intellectually stimulate one another when they pleased, at the same time providing them with the solitude necessary to complete their work.

The Cornish colony, however, did not exist in a vacuum.Colonists required space, goods, and services, all of these available through the townspeople. There were many beneficial points of economic contact between the two groups; in fact, this healthy give-and-take relationship between the groups fed cultural interaction which might otherwise not have occurred.

Cultural interaction between colonists and Cornish "natives" was potentially strained, for the colonists' business involved the modification of American culture into various art forms. Colonists took a strong interest in Cornish town culture, but sought to elevate it and improve it, rather than to include themselves in it. The "tasteful" rag rugs produced by the colony-founded Mothers and Daughters Club were aesthetic variations of the "crudely-colored" rag rugs produced by Cornish townswomen. Colonists introduced aesthetic appreciation to the native-born children of Cornish through the mediums of library and school. Yet they remained essentially apart from town culture though their works (and good works) were suffused with town-cultural imagery.

Social interaction between adults of both groups was virtually non-existent. Many townspeople assisted in colony homes; it certainly
was not considered proper to socialize with one's servants. Colonists were not coming to Cornish to become farmers; instead they came to develop and refine their aesthetic ideals. Differences in lifestyle and in cultural background between the two groups thus created a social gap too wide to bridge in most cases.

The potential for conflict was great. But the colonists in general were a private and exclusive sort of people, surrounding their properties with hedges, forests, and great cast iron fences. As Robert Frost has said, "...good fences make good neighbors"; perhaps the solution to open conflict lay in the fact that there was sufficient distance between the two groups to allow them to coexist for the most part at peace.

However, the legacy of strain between the groups persists today. The Augustus St. Gaudens home is now a National Historic Site, to date, the only National Parksite to honor the home of an American artist. An informal survey conducted by the Site staff during the summer of 1979 revealed that six percent of the park's visitors in 1978 had come from the immediate locale.

In short, the colonists of Cornish as a group never quite assimilated themselves into the life of the town. Although there were many points of economic and cultural contact between townspeople and colonists, town culture was never embraced by the colony and social relations between groups were limited. The second generations of both groups kept to their own kind. In the 1920's and 1930's, the advent of
an intensely personal conceptual art made group interaction in a country setting seem increasingly irrelevant to artists. This trend, coupled with the Depression sent most of the artists back to the cities, and colony houses were sold. Today, evidence of the presence of ninety of America's most scintillating artists, writers, and politicians in Cornish is limited to a few country villas hidden behind pines, a small one-room clubhouse, and the picturebook gardens of the townsfolk of Cornish and Plainfield.
FOOTNOTES

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