

Hopkinton was founded in this house

By MARION WIDGER
News Staff Writer

HOPKINTON — The picturesque white clapboard cape on Main Street just east of the center has a story to tell. Right here in its dining room the town of Hopkinton was founded. A group of settlers gathered around its huge, open fireplace in what was then the kitchen and drew up the proclamation. The town was settled on land given to Harvard College by Edward Hopkins, and named Hopkinstown at first.

Even now, in a frame over the fireplace mantel in that room, is the original proclamation of the founding, signed by the incorporators. The house was used as the first Meeting House of the town. The first town meeting was held here March 25, 1724.

Its first four rooms, a kitchen and parlor on the first floor, and two bedrooms upstairs, were built

in 1715 by John How, a carpenter and one of the first settlers. Later, in 1740, the present kitchen was added. In 1880, a shed used for a cobbler's shop was built off that.

Because How could read and write, he became the first town clerk and selectman. For 10 years, he held town meetings in his kitchen until, in 1725, a permanent meeting house was built in the center of town.

How's name also comes up in town records for building the first stocks in the village for the incarceration of legal law breakers, and for suing the town for money owed for boarding the own's first minister, the Rev. Samuel Barrett, and his horse.

Part of a family with a heritage of carpentry, How was the nephew of the man who built the Wayside Inn.

Not surprisingly, the parlor fireplace is a duplicate of one that

warmed George Washington at the Sudbury hostelry.

The house has many fascinating antique features — rugged old beams, wide pine floorboards and panelling stained almost cherry red, an old stone sink in the kitchen, a pulpet staircase and old glass panes in the windows. The dining room fireplace (the one that was used for the original kitchen) has a beehive oven and kindling wood closet. Above the mantel was a cupboard to warm the wine that the parson served visiting clergymen. Both here, and the fireplace in the parlor, are outfitted with cranes for hearthside cooking.

The two fireplaces are supported by a foundation of fieldstone layered on wooden planks, a

feature that varifies the date of the house.

The house is on an almost acre lot, edged with a little

Centered in a circular driveway is a huge chestnut tree, which is at least a third as old as the house, and beneath that an ancient Indian mill once used for ground meal.

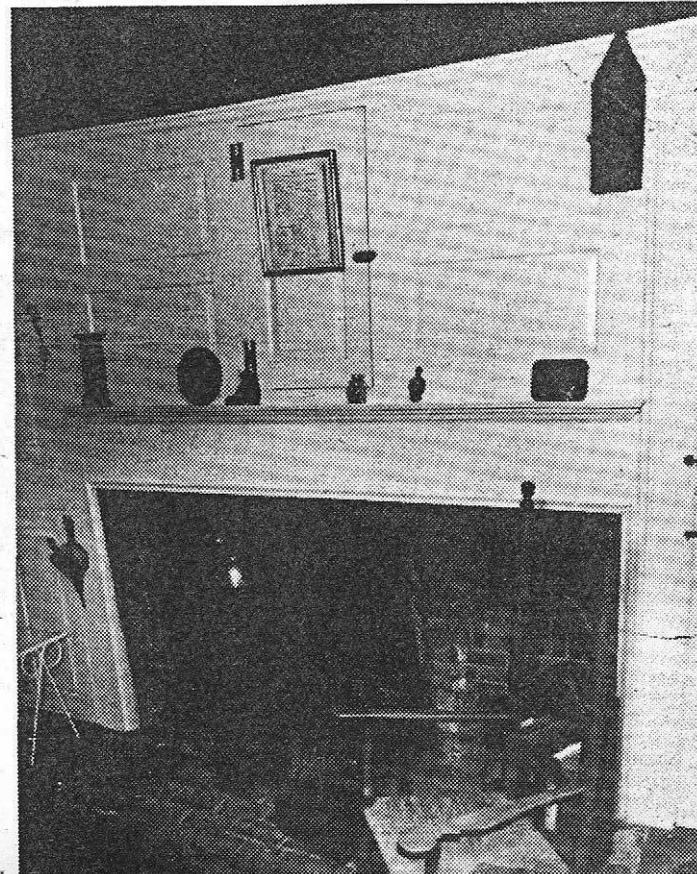
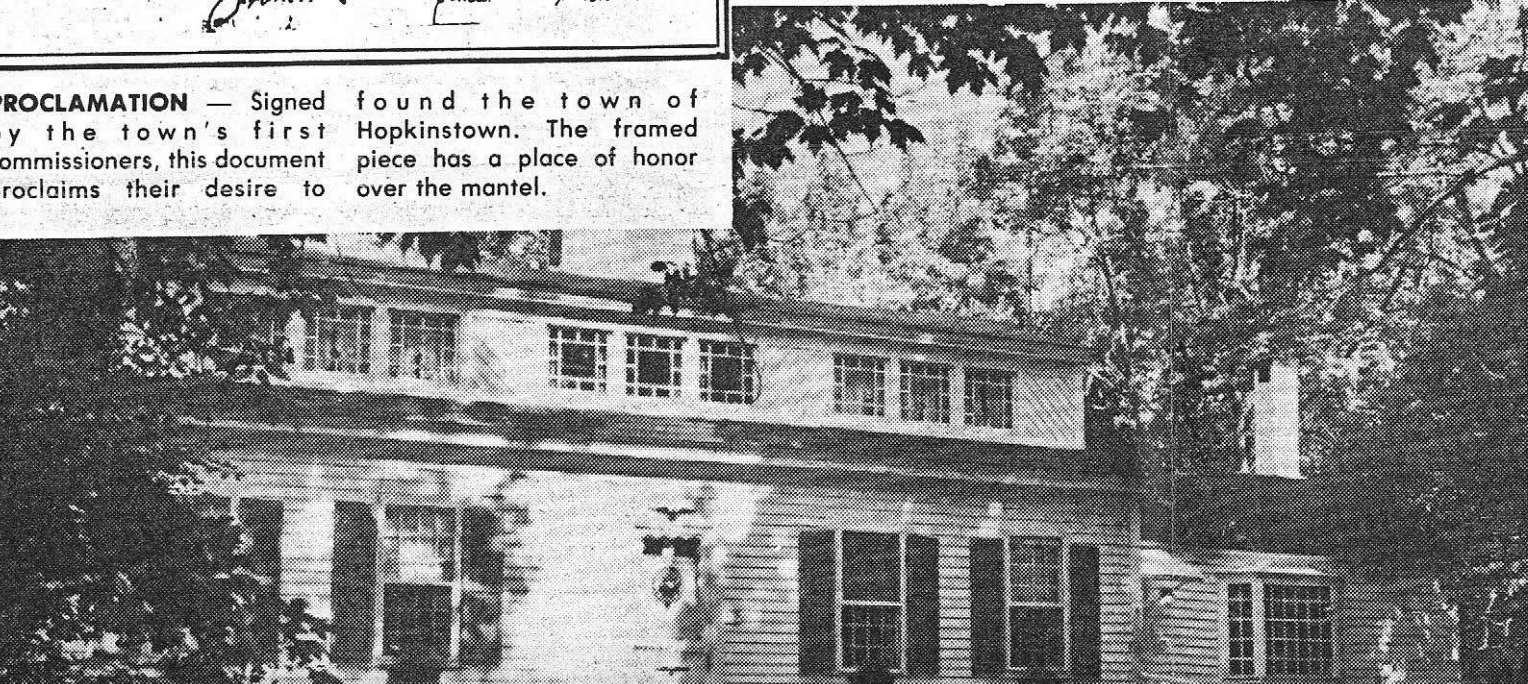
In a small barn, the present owner, Mrs. Rueul Strong, has an antique business until 1950. She was also the town librarian for 10 years and active in numerous affairs.

The house is now owned by George and Irene Blake. They inherited it from his aunt, who died in December, 1981. They have it on the market at an asking price of \$149,900.

The petition of we the subscribers inhabitants of Hopkinton Humbly sheweth that whereas we apprehend we have not the power of a Town nor yet Capable of Choosing our Officers at this season we Humbly pray your Honours would be pleased to petition the Honourable General Court (as speedily as may be) that they will be pleased to appoint us a time to convene together in due course some officers that we may (with what we are in hope your Honours will see for us) be capable of Constant in pay ment of the people preched a mong us

*Benjamin Wood
John How
John Emery
James Colver
Benjamin Correll
Joseph Rowson
Thomas Weather
John Hamilton
Ralph Stone
Daniel Stone
William Hayden
John Butler
Thomas Cox
John Alton
Gaal Witherly
Samuel West
Peter How
Elihu Giles
Robt. Weston
Hugh Black
Henry Mullen
Francis Fairson
Philip Code
John Howden
Selph
Francis Pearce
Elaawan Allen*

PROCLAMATION — Signed by the town's first commissioners, this document proclaims their desire to found the town of Hopkinstown. The framed piece has a place of honor over the mantel.



John James Colton
 John Hamilton
 Daniel Stone
 William Hayden
 John Butler
 Samuel Witherly
 Peter How
 Elizer Gibbs
 Robert Weston
 Hugh Black
 Henry Mullen
 Jonathan Fairson
 Philip Code
 John Gardner
 Francis Peirce
 Ebenezer Allen

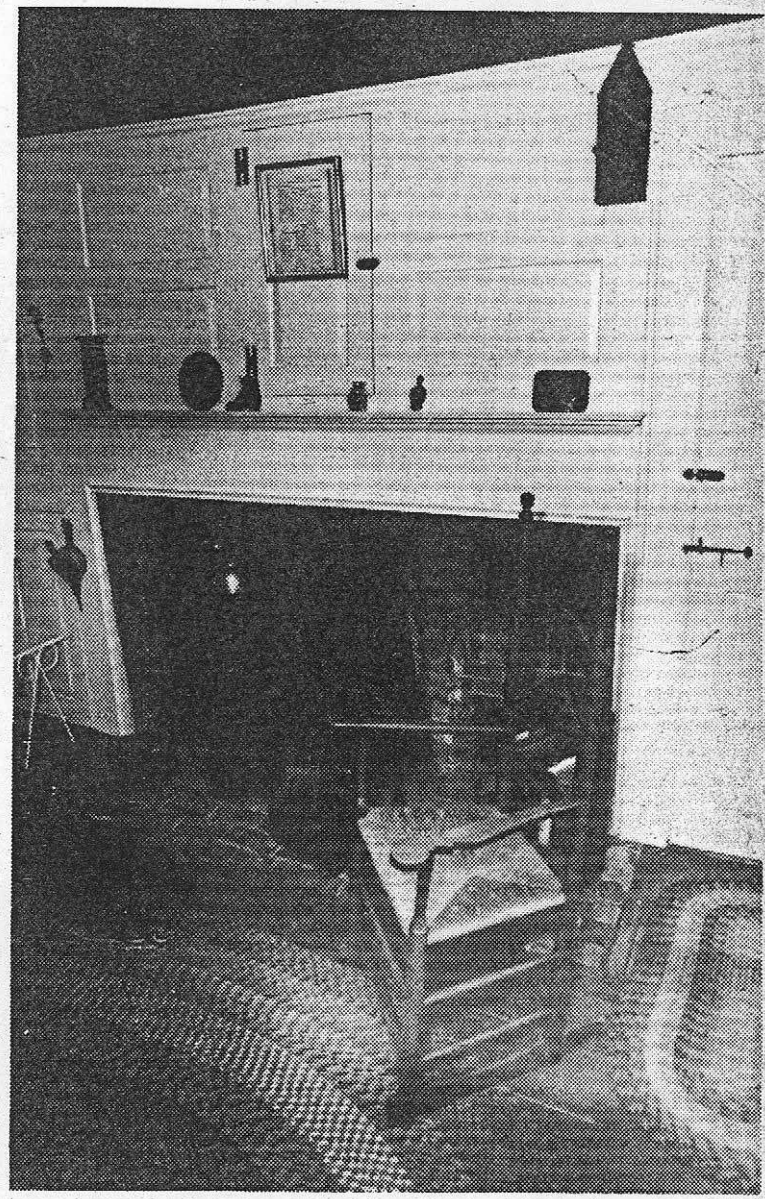
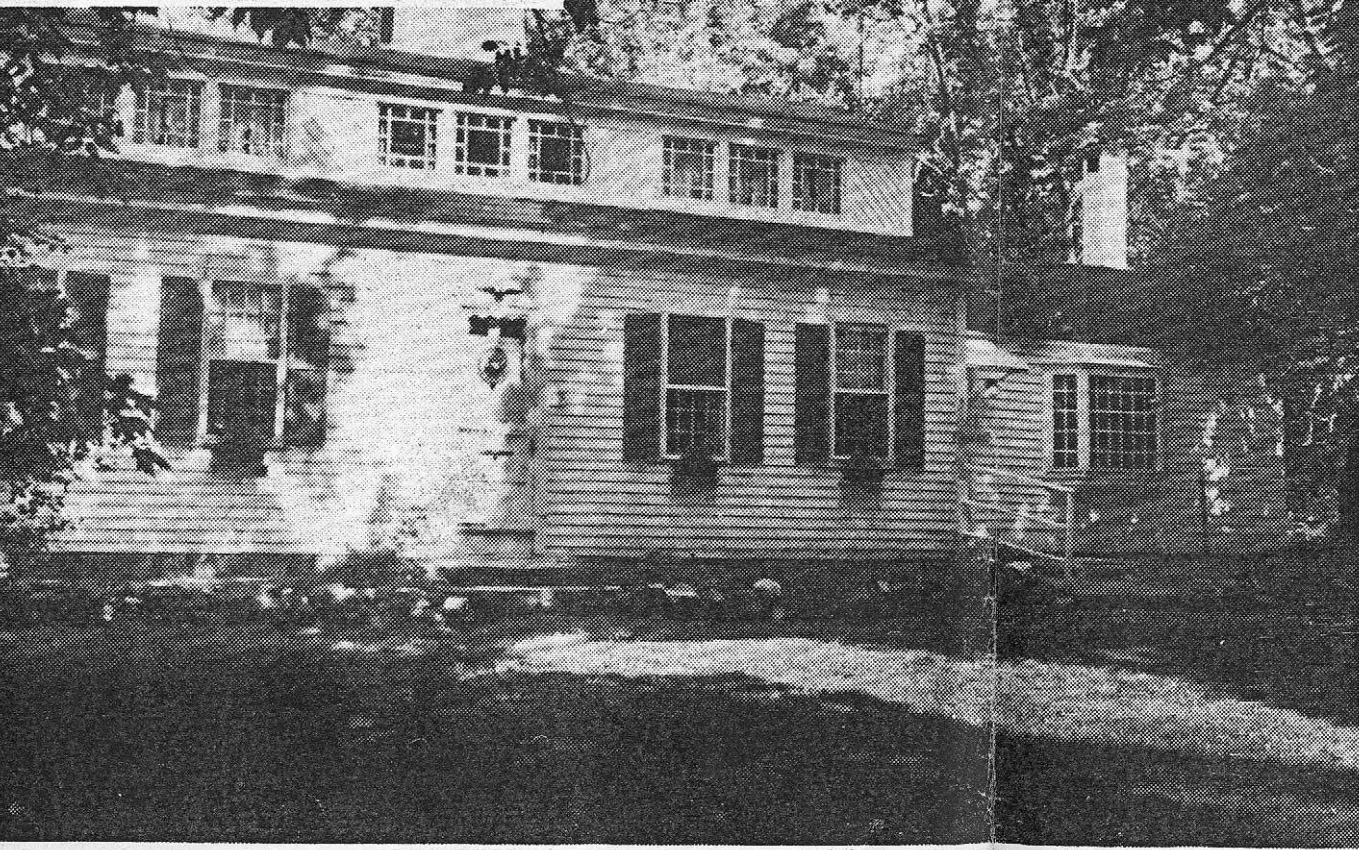
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ON — Signed found the town of
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HISTORY — This pretty cape among the trees off was deeply involved in Hopkinton's beginnings. as built by the first town clerk — so designated

because he could read and write — the first town meetings were held here.

IF WALLS COULD TALK — Before this fireplace, the town's founding fathers gathered to establish Hopkinton 260 years ago. A cupboard above the mantel housed wine to be warmed for the visitors of the town's first pastor, who lived here.

(News Photos by George Martell)

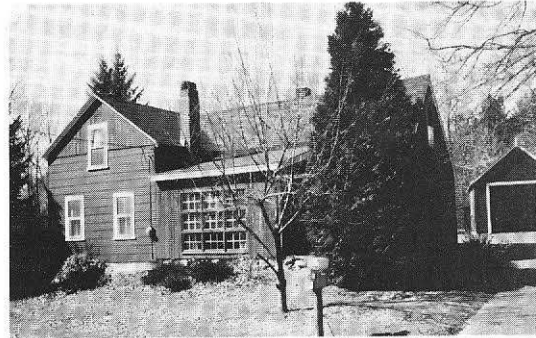
HOPKINTON

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE UNUSUAL? You'll love this 10 Room home with 1 1/2 ACRES of PRIVACY. Country kitchen with wood stove. Family room with Cathedral Ceiling and Stone Fireplace. Master bedroom suite with Cathedral Ceiling. 3 1/2 BATHS. MANY EXTRAS.
MLS ...\$169,000.



HISTORIC CAPE BUILT IN 1715. FIRST TOWN MEETING held here when Town of Hopkinton Incorporated. Authentic wide board floors, beamed ceilings and 12/12 windows. COBBLER'S SHED AND BARN. 2.6 ACRES with circular drive.
MLS ...\$153,900. *

COLONIAL FARMHOUSE with 2-car garage and attached workshop or studio. All applianced kitchen. Large dining room with woodburning stove. Living room with stone fireplace. Screened porch opening off living room. 1 1/2 Baths.
MLS ...\$73,900.



John & Mary McDonough

Realtors



44 HAYDEN ROWE STREET
HOPKINTON, MASS. 01748

435-3818 or 435-3428

85

* The house was sold in 1984 & is now in the process of a SAHR. I WAS ON THE MARKET THIS TIME FOR \$285000

Historic home was first Meeting House

Oct 14, 1973

By G. OLENIEWSKI
Of The News Staff

HOPKINTON — The town of Hopkinton was founded in the dining room of Mr. and Mrs. Reuel Strong's house. Well, more or less.

The Strong's home, at 21 E. Main St., overflows with the atmosphere and

memorabilia of the early 18th century when Hopkinton was settled.

The reason is as interesting as the quaint little house itself, which was the original Meeting House, built in 1715.

The house was built by John How, a carpenter by trade, and one of the first settlers of the land established through a bequest of money made to Harvard College by an Englishman, Edward Hopkins.

Originally named Hopkinstown in honor of its donor, the 25,000 acres were leased to tenants for a penny an acre.

Mainly because John How could read and write, he became the first town clerk and selectman. The first meetings of the town were held in his home until a permanent meeting house was built in 1725. It was in these rooms that the newborn community felt its first growing pains.

How also opened his home to Hopkinton's first minister, the Rev. Samuel Barrett of Harvard Divinity School, who boarded there with his horse for a year until his home was built on the site of the present town hall.

But How's generosity was fickle and later he sued the

town for the board of Rev. Barrett and his horse. He also built the first stocks in the village for the incarceration of legal transgressors.

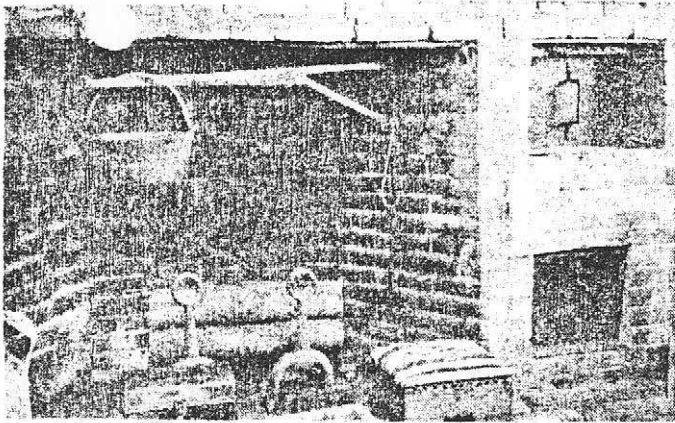
Allegedly the oldest house in Hopkinton, the Meeting House consists mainly of four rooms, two large ones downstairs and two smaller bedrooms upstairs. Around 1740 an additional room was built which now serves as the kitchen.

The original kitchen which the Strongs use as a combination sitting room-work room-dining room, is the most interesting room historically. Here the early settlers gathered to organize their government.

The room was warmed for them by a large fireplace complete with bake ovens and kindling wood closet. Above the mantel was located the parson's cupboard which held the wine to warm the visiting clergyman.

Mrs. Strong has been faithful to the character of the room by furnishing it with Windsor chairs, table, cupboard and antiques of the period, including a coal burning foot warmer, candlestick mold, lanterns, and chinaware.

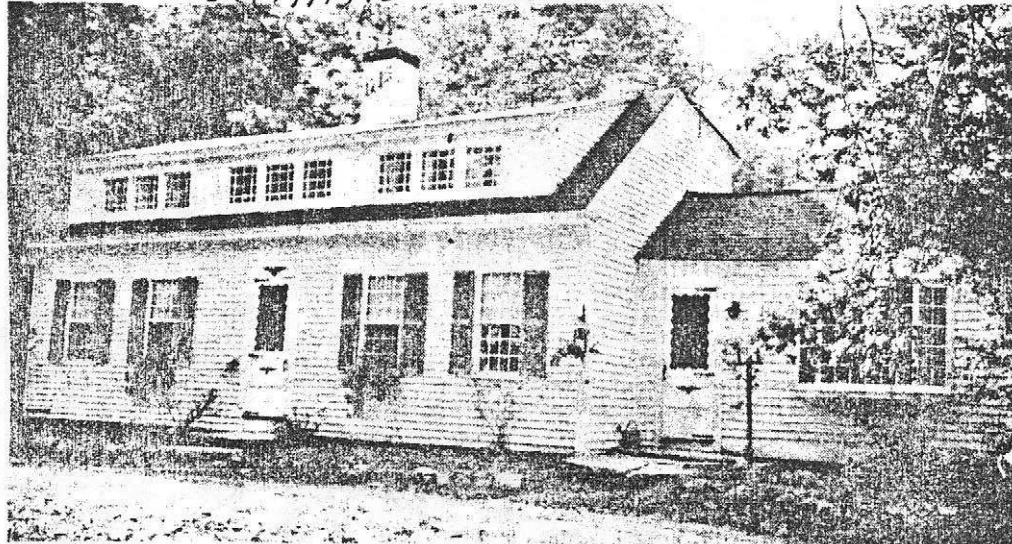
The adjacent parlor boasts another fireplace, a duplicate of the one that warmed George Washington



YE OLD HEARTH — Old fashioned fireplace remains in the 1715 house on 21 East Main St., Hopkinton. Note dutch ovens on right.

(News Photo by Gene Mazel)

Oct 14, 1973



EX-MEETING HOUSE — The stately home of Mr. and Mrs. Reuel Strong once served the town as a

meeting house and has since been the home of several historic residents.

(News Photo by Gene Mazel)

Oct 14, 1973



MRS. STRONG AND LOLLY — The present owner of the house, Mrs. Reuel Strong, holds her dog Lolly as they sit near a bay window amidst antiques and historic memorabilia. (News Photo by Bill Edmunds)

when he slept at the Wayside Inn in Sudbury. That's more than coincidence, though, since the How family of carpenters built the Wayside Inn.

On the mantel of this fireplace Mrs. Strong keeps an 18th century antique of "shocking" value in more than one sense of the word. The frog mug was reserved for serving unwelcome guests in the British home or pub. Halfway through his brew, the unsuspecting visitor could see a ceramic but disgustingly realistic frog pouring the brew through his slimy mouth.

The two fireplaces are supported by a foundation of fieldstone layered on wooden planks, a very old technique which adds authenticity to the building.

The Meeting House was not always maintained as an historical site. When the Strongs bought it in 1944, previous residents had neglected it but, fortunately, not remodeled it. The Strongs installed plumbing, heating and electricity and began the necessary repairs and redecoration.

"We tried to marry yesterday's grace with today's comfort," Mrs. Strong said about her project.

The property, including a spacious barn, was used to house Mrs. Strong's antique shop until 1958 when she devoted her full time efforts to the town library.

She has drawn from her background in antiques and her great knowledge of the area's history in creating a tribute to Hopkinton's past.