

## Town of Tilton

257 Main Street  
Tilton, NH 03276  
603.286.4521 Town Hall  
603.286.3519 Fax  
www.tiltonnh.org



## Board of Selectmen

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## Project: Tilton, NH Project to Preserve, Microfilm, and Digitize a Map of a Section of East Main Street by the Winnepesaukee River

### Grant Abstract

Established in 1869, the town of Tilton has long had a vital connection to the Winnepesaukee River which provided water power for the use of its residents in early saw and grist mill days to the many water-powered factories that lined the river from the mid-1850s through the first half of the twentieth century. The town is seeking to preserve, stabilize, and frame an eight-foot by two-foot hand-drawn map of a small section of East Main Street along the Winnepesaukee River. It is different from the "Bird's-Eye-View" and Sanborn Insurance maps as it offers unique details about the river, the mill lands, and the road - all of which were factors which influenced the history and direction of this community as well as the state of New Hampshire. The intent is to have the map scanned onto microfilm and digitized to provide greater accessibility for residents and historians to view and study.

The map has been stored, rolled up in a tube, and appears to be in good condition, but it does show some signs of wear and tear. Given that this year is Tilton's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it seems only appropriate to give the map a facelift and have it hang on a wall at town hall to remind local townspeople and visitors that this community has a rich history that is tied closely to the river that runs along the town's boundary.

### Project Narrative

#### A. Description of document and importance to the history of NH

The large Tilton map is hand-drawn and colored on what has been described as drafting cloth or architectural starch cloth. While it does not list an author, the map clearly shows multiple, labelled lots as being connected to the Lake Company and refers to the Lake Company Atlas of 1911. The NH Historical Society Library has a Plan Book of the Winnipissiogee Lake Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company (Lake Company) that shows a smaller version of this map with the same style, format, orientation, scale, colors, stone bounds, and content (2017.100.002.1882-1884 pages 105-109). Their map is dated 1884, while the Tilton map references 1911 data. Both the maps at the NH Historical Society and the Tilton map appear to

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have been prepared by the same surveyor, Almon A. Platts, given the inks used and the style of map. He also drew maps in 1883 and 1884 for properties in Alton Bay, Holderness, Laconia, and Plymouth. The NH Division of Archives and Records has three maps of East Tilton properties surveyed by Mr. Platts with some of the same features found on the Tilton map, although they show fewer landmarks or details about road distances and lot sizes.

The Tilton map, while physically large, shows a fairly small bend in the Winnepesaukee River with a dam linking the towns of Tilton and Northfield as well as a Mill Pond and canal in the Winnepesaukee River. A saw mill is found at a prominent spot next to the road, now Route 3 or Laconia Road. The railroad tracks, which are still present at the site, are shown at the bottom of the document and are listed as part of the Boston, Concord, and Montreal R.R. One note indicates that there is a railroad right-of-way. The highway on the Tilton side of the map shows distances, bank walls, and fence posts as well as well as stone bounds with dates of 1883-4. The scale is one inch equals fifty feet, except for an inset that uses one inch equals forty feet. There are several notes indicating that the data for the plan was "obtained from the Lake Company's office at Lakeport". There are also a significant series of numbered references to documents held at the Belknap County Registry of Deeds, which detail that the Lake Company had water privileges or the right to dam an owner's property without being held liable for damages.

Properties belonging to Charles E. Tilton and William D. Cass are listed on the Tilton portion of the map, while the Northfield side shows land owned by farmer Cheney Huckins and John Heath.

Charles E. Tilton, who was instrumental in establishing the town in his grandfather's name, passed away in 1901, but his second wife, Genieve, named her son, Charles Elliott Tilton, Jr., as heir to all her estate in 1908 (NH Wills and Probate Records, Vol. 43-46, 1913-1939, page 412). Charles, Jr., who was born in 1887, attended Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before returning to Tilton. The Granite Monthly (Vol. XLV - No. 3-4 March-April 1913, page 110) states that he was a state representative to the NH Legislature at that time. He and his family were listed as still living at the family home in Tilton in the 1930 United States Census.

William D. Cass was a Methodist minister who passed away in 1869. At the time of his death, he was described as "loud", "able and useful but not popular" (NH Conference April 1-6, 1868 in Lawrence, page 91). His wife, Betsey C. Knowles, came from Northfield, and she left their property to her brothers and their children in her 1870 will (NH Will and Probate Records, Vol. 16-20, 1877-1913, page 276) although she didn't die until twelve years later. One listing on

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the map citing the Belknap County Registry of Deeds (Book 43 page 606) stated that the Rev. Cass had accepted \$500 from the Lake Company for a parcel of his land and he agreed "...to never claim damage to his premises by reason of flowage from the dam at the height it is now constructed".

There are half a dozen other places on the map that indicate Lake Company property or flowage rights. Some reference the Belknap and Merrimack County Registries of Deeds and others list Strafford County records. There is a sketch of the flowage at Shaker Bridge and a note that the water at Shaker Bridge on May 3, 1911 was five feet above the top of the dam. Another reference notes that the surface of water at an upstream canal was the same as the dam on May 3, 1911.

The Tilton map showcases several of the influences on central NH communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Railroads, textile mills, and new roads were important factors bringing people and business to these communities north of Concord, and providing economic growth to an agrarian community.

The Winnepissiogee Lake Cotton & Woolen Company (Lake Company) came to the Lakes Region in order to acquire more water to power the mills in southern New Hampshire and the mill towns of Lawrence and Lowell. They sought to obtain additional water power to meet the needs of the mills downstream during summer months when flowage might ebb. They were able to accomplish this by purchasing land and water rights from owners along the Winnepesaukee River. The Lake Company originally convinced the New Hampshire Legislature that their only interest was to improve lake navigation and improve water flowage. They were able to deepen channels, build dams, and flood nearby fields to keep water at the ready. These actions did create some problems when local farmers saw their hay fields ruined by water that was being stored on their property. Multiple lawsuits and occasional violence erupted during the second part of the nineteenth century, primarily in Lakeport. The Lake Company typically prevailed in court as water was considered a type of property. The courts also were afraid that the economic impact to the manufacturing industry could be disastrous if they ruled against the mill owners. The Lake Company changed tactics and started purchasing land and flowage rights which they would then lease to mill owners. The Tilton map shows properties that are labelled as belonging to the Lake Company or having privileges.

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In the 1870s, there was a failed attempt to revoke the Lake Company's charter. Author Theodore Steinberg writes, in his book Nature Incorporated, that witnesses from Tilton (possibly mill owners) spoke in support of the Lake Company. The court also noted that Tilton and five other local communities were producing over five million dollars in products each year and employing over two thousand people. The Lake Company eventually sold its water privileges to a company that was sold to Public Service of New Hampshire. Later, water rights were conveyed to the New Hampshire State Division of Water Resources.

The Tilton map also shows the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad tracks that cross the Winnepesaukee River on route to Laconia. While the railroad tracks are used infrequently these days, the railroad was quite important to both the state and to Tilton. The line reached Tilton in May of 1848 and was as far north as Plymouth two years later. A Concord & Montreal Railroad System Booklet stated that "...this railway system is a beneficent minister, bringing thousands upon thousands of pilgrims, tourists, and visitors face to face with its attractions and beauties." An article in the Granite Monthly – A New Hampshire Magazine from 1885 says that the "...nearness of railroad facilities place the town (Tilton) in the foremost ranks for a manufacturing place (page 323).

By 1859, Tilton mill owner Alexander Hamilton Tilton was a member of the Board of Directors for the Boston, Concord, and Montreal RR. He was the son of Colonel Jeremiah Tilton and brother to Samuel, Charles E. Tilton's father. He is also remembered for inventing the woolen Tilton Tweeds.

The complex history of the struggle for ownership of the railroads, their consolidation, and many mergers is detailed in R. Stuart Wallace's "NH Railroads Historic Context Statement" (April 2001). However, it is certain that the railroad assisted in bringing tourists to the region as well as contributing to the industrialization of the community. Materials needed to supply the mill production had to be shipped by railroad. The wife of former Tilton State Representative, Kenneth Randall, tells the story about Ken's grandfather who worked at the George H. Tilton mill. She writes that "... the men who worked at a mill in the South (Charleston, SC) and shipped bales of cotton North, would periodically shove a watermelon in between a couple of bales with a note attached saying that it was for Frank Randall – please deliver as soon as possible. Great evening at the Randall home those nights." (See Appendix)

The road shown on the Tilton map is sometimes called Laconia Road, but it is part of US Route 3 which is the only road that goes entirely from the Massachusetts border to the Canadian border. For Franklin and Tilton residents, it is still the primary road to Laconia. The Tilton map

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shows road segments and their distances as well as stone bounds dated 1883 and 1884. Road widths seem to be written in red ink while distances are in black.

Before 1900, only 4% of United States roads were paved. But as cars became more prevalent, there was increased interest in paving roads. Tilton town reports (<http://www.tiltonnh.org/content/documents/townmeeting/Town%20Meetingt%20Index%20%201869%20to%20present.pdf>)

show that residents voted in 1900 to pave town roads although there is no mention of funds being allocated, and in 1902 they dismissed a motion to macadamize a road. From 1905 through 1922, the townspeople voted to “accept state aid for highways and to allocate money for the same.” In 1906 the article to lay out a highway off East Main Street was approved, and six years later it was voted to pave Main Street. Because of the ambiguity connected with this map, it is difficult to know what the road notations and numbers connote. It does seem reasonable to assume that Tilton residents were willing to provide tax dollars to improve their roads.

It has been said that a map can be a snapshot in time for a particular place. It is certainly true in this case, but the Tilton map also connects the town’s past to its present. The Tilton Conservation Commission purchased a parcel of land shown on the map in 2009. Shortly afterwards, it was discovered that there were problems with the deed, and the Commission spent the next four years obtaining clear title to the property. Since that time, the Commissioners have worked to return the land to a position as a conservation and recreation area for all to enjoy. Visitors and residents who use the Tilton portion of the Winnepesaukee Railroad Trail can begin or end their hike at this historic property. It has come full circle from the earliest of days when Native Americans spent the summers fishing along the banks, to when industrialization tried to manage and control the waters, to a time and place where the river is now the focus for all who drive by or use the trail.

### Condition

The map has been housed in a cardboard tube, is intact, and has been described as being in relatively good condition. Michael Lee of NEDCC/Northeast Document Conservation Center viewed a photo and described the map as having “some mold damage and heavy soiling along the margins”. The blue and black inks used are still quite clear, but some of the red ink appears to be slightly blurred. Mr. Lee has said there is cockling which needs to be reduced. There are some small tears along the top edge of the map.

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### B. Conservation activities and budget justification

Because of the nature of the starch cloth background, the conservation plan is to surface clean the map, recognizing that no water treatment can be used, and to preserve the map in its entirety. The vendor will be asked to reduce the cockling to the extent practicable. The edges of the map are mostly intact and nothing need be done to them. The town would like the document to be matted and framed, preferably with a simple wooden frame. Because of its size, the map should have a UV Plexiglas covering for protection and for ease in transporting to the Tilton Town Hall. The grant specifies that the document is to have preservation microfilm for the NH State Library and the NH State Archives, and that is included in the budget. The town is particularly interested in having the document digitized to aid in increasing public access. Due to its size, the map may have to be digitized in sections. Advantage Preservation indicated that they can accommodate the length in their scanner, but there may be issues with the width, which could mean digitizing in sections.

The following vendors were contacted for information and non-binding quotes:

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) - Andover, MA – Michael Lee

Cape Cod Picture Framing & Restoration – Dennis MA – Ron Lindholm

Advantage Preservation – Hiawatha, IA – Grant Kaestner

A fourth vendor did not respond to the Commission's request for information.

A local business provided a verbal quote only.

Michael Lee of NEDCC was familiar with starch cloth and how to provide safe surface cleaning for the map. He also specializes in paper conservation with large format objects. Their company is located in Andover, Massachusetts, which is a reasonable distance from Tilton, which means that members of the Commission could bring and pick up the completed map to NEDCC without having to pay for shipping fees. A resident of Northfield, NH who had used their services for a grant spoke highly of NEDCC's work. Mr. Lee gave a non-binding quote of \$4500 to clean, stabilize, and frame the map as well as \$1000 for digital imaging (See Appendix). The company does not, however, provide microfilm services.

A Google search related to microfilm processing led to Advantage Preservation and Grant Kaestner in Iowa. The site listed work that they had done for the Dover Public Library. We contacted librarian Cathy Beaudoin who "heartily" recommended their digitization services as well as the contact person, Mr. Kaestner (See Appendix). She said that they send appropriate sized boxes and labels and arrange for pickup. Their non-binding bid for microfilming and digitizing was \$750. In

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a follow-up email to Mr. Kaestner, he indicated that shipping costs would be included in the final bid but should not exceed \$120 ( See Appendix). For the sake of transparency, the original bid and the potential shipping costs have both been listed in the budget with the understanding that the final cost should be less.

The NEDCC website states that they adhere "...to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in all its treatments and programming."

Advantage Preservation "...prides itself not only on meeting, but exceeding ANSI/AIIM standards for archival microfilming."

**C. Means of increasing public access (use and access)**

The eight-foot long framed map will be hung on a wall in the Tilton Town Hall for residents and visitors to see. As required by the Moose Plate Grant application, microfilm will be provided to the NH State Archives and the NH State Library. Digitized copies of the map will be made available to the Hall Memorial Library which serves the communities of Tilton and Northfield and has a room dedicated to local history. In addition, both the Tilton Conservation Commission website ([www.tiltoncc.org](http://www.tiltoncc.org)) and the town website ([www.tiltonnh.org](http://www.tiltonnh.org)) can host digitized images of the document for public access. There is a kiosk at the actual site by the river that contains information about property. A photo of the map will be posted at the kiosk so hikers and bikers can see the image. In doing research for this application, the Commission contacted both the NH Department of Transportation and the Dam Bureau of NH DES to see if they had any information about this particular map. While they did not, each said that they would like a digitized copy of the document for their records (See Appendix). Also, a group of local residents are in the process of establishing a Tilton Historical Society. As they become more established, they may want a digitized copy for their collection.

