

THE MIDDLESEX CANAL
PRINTS BY LOUIS LINSOTT



Published by the
Middlesex Canal Association
Billerica, Massachusetts
1978

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The drawing of a canal boat on the cover and title page is also by Louis Linscott
and is from the Middlesex Canal Association collection.

The other page decoration is from an 1830 newspaper advertisement for the
Middlesex Canal packet boat.

Preface . . .



One hundred and seventy-five years ago, after ten long years of planning and digging, the Middlesex Canal was completed and opened for business. For fifty years, from 1803 to 1853, along its 27¼ mile route from Charlestown, through Somerville, Medford, Winchester, Woburn, Wilmington, Billerica and Chelmsford, to Middlesex Village (now part of Lowell), draft horses pulled passenger packets and barges through a series of twenty locks and eight aquaducts. At Middlesex Village, boats entered the Merrimack River and were poled or sailed up the River as far as Concord, New Hampshire. At the other end, traffic reached Boston by crossing the Charlestown Mill Pond and entering the branch canal leading down the present Canal Street to the Quincy Market.

The Canal was a vital force in opening up to development the interior of New Hampshire, whence came logs and timbers for the Medford shipyards of Thatcher Magoun. Granite from the Westford and Tyngsborough quarries was carried down the Canal for the construction of the Quincy Market and the State Prison at Charlestown. On the return trip from Boston, much needed supplies and consumer goods were sped into the interior. Later, the raw cotton consumed in huge quantities by the Lowell mills and the cotton cloth they wove travelled up and down the Canal.

In addition to commercial traffic there were the tourists, most celebrated of whom were Daniel Webster and Henry David Thoreau, who described his trip in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. The Canal Proprietors were among the first to cater to the tourist trade by developing a pleasure resort at Horn Pond in Woburn, complete with restaurant, swimming, picnic grove, band concerts, excursion boats and a bowling alley.

In 1978, one hundred and seventy-five years later, we celebrate the opening at a time of renewed interest in the Canal. The State Department of Public Works has restored a section of canal in Wilmington. The Chelmsford Historical Commission is preserving the old Middlesex Village toll house. The Commonwealth has established a Middlesex Canal Commission. Billerica has restored the pier of the Shawsheen Aquaduct. But the centre of activity is Woburn, where the Historical Commission has moved and restored the Baldwin Mansion, and developed and restored a substantial section of the Canal. Here the Woburn Canal Society, under the leadership of Leonard Harmon, is offering, on summer weekends, excursions in a packet boat built by its members and pulled by Lightfoot, the Society's Percheron. It is fitting that the 175th anniversary celebration should take place in Loammi Baldwin's home town.

As its contribution, the Middlesex Canal Association is pleased to offer this booklet of reproductions of several of the many canal scenes painted by Louis Linscott in the early part of the twentieth century. We hope that it will honor the memory of an early "canal buff", and preserve a fine pictorial record of the old days on the Middlesex.

FRANCES B. VER PLANCK
President
Middlesex Canal Association

About the Artist . . .



A well-known artist, illustrator, and historian of Woburn, Louis Roscoe Linscott (1876-1966) made the Middlesex Canal known to thousands of people through his series of historic scenes of old Woburn, published annually for many years on the calendars of the S. B. Goodard & Son Co.

Son of Andrew R. Linscott for whom the Linscott School in North Woburn was named, and brother of Arthur H. Linscott, former mayor of Woburn, Louis Linscott was born and spent many years of his life at the family homestead, 2 Poole Street, North Woburn.

A graduate of the Cowles Art School in Boston, he studied art for two years in Paris, then for two years in London. In 1902 he married Catherine Wilkie Bennet of London, England.

Upon his return to the United States, Louis Linscott became one of the leading designers and illustrators of Boston. Until a few years before his death he resided in the family home in North Woburn. His daughters, Dorothy Linscott Clarke and Virginia Linscott Porter, followed in his profession.

From early boyhood Mr. Linscott was keenly interested in the Middlesex Canal, a long stretch of which ran near his home. His daughters shared that interest, and generously gave the Middlesex Canal Association several of their father's paintings and prints of the canal, including the original of the oft-reproduced scene of the Baldwin mansion with its formal gardens and a canal boat on the canal. The Linscott Art Collection is housed at the Archives of the Middlesex Canal Association at the University of Lowell Library.

Mary Stetson Clarke

Acknowledgments . . .



The editors gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Mr. Edward Mahoney and S. B. Goodard & Son Co., which commissioned many of the Linscott paintings for their annual calendar, for their kind permission to reproduce them; to the Trustees of the Woburn Public Library for the loan of other Linscott paintings and for permission to reproduce them; to Louis Linscott's descendants for their many kindnesses; to Mary Stetson Clarke for her profile of the artist; to the Middlesex Canal Association for sponsoring this publication; and most of all to the artist for making it possible.

*Arthur L. Eno, Jr.
Thomas A. Smith*



The Prints . . .

- 4** The "General Sullivan"
One of the two packetboats owned by the Proprietors of the Middlesex Canal, the "Governor Sullivan" (as it was called) was named for the Canal's first president, Governor James Sullivan. It is shown here, with a full complement of passengers, approaching Abbott's Landing in Woburn.
- 5** The Upper Horn Pond Lock
At Horn Pond in Woburn, the Canal dropped fifty feet through three sets of double locks. This print shows a barge being locked through one of the upper locks. In the background is one of the many taverns built beside the locks.
- 6** The Horn Pond House
The most famous of the Horn Pond taverns was the Horn Pond House. Passage through the three sets of locks was time-consuming. The delays resulted in an eager clientele for this and the three other taverns built near the locks.
- 7** Horn Pond - *circa* 1830
Next to the Horn Pond locks was the Pond, developed by the Middlesex Canal Proprietors as a public resort, with boats for rent, a picnic grove, a bowling alley, facilities for swimming, and, on the island in the distance, a pavilion where bands played and refreshments were served.
- 8** Abbott's Landing
Samuel Abbott's landing and lumber yard on the Middlesex Canal was located approximately in back of the present Woburn Public Library and was a shipping and receiving point for building materials and other merchandise. Loads of bark were brought down the Canal from New Hampshire and teamed by ox cart to the tanneries of Woburn.
- 9** Benjamin Wood's Golden Ball Tavern
Located on the Easterly side of Main Street, just North of the busy bend in Woburn Centre, this tavern was noted for its fine food and drinks. At one time the Post Office occupied a portion of the building. The first elephant ever seen in Woburn was brought to town on the Middlesex Canal in 1817 and exhibited in the shed just North of the Tavern. It is seen here being led back to its stall.
- 10** Bud Parker's Tavern, Central Square, Woburn
The Parker Tavern was located on the principal stage route North from Woburn and only a few rods from the Middlesex Canal. It was here that the Canal Directors, Proprietors and their guests dined during the first official journey up the canal. The ancient hostel was the scene of many other canal dinners, skating parties, sleigh riding excursions and military musters.

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The "Black House", Central Square,
Woburn

Erected in 1790 by Joseph Bartlett, the first lawyer in Woburn, the house was always painted black. This caused the locals to suspect that Bartlett was in league with the powers of darkness. The Middlesex Canal passed in the rear of the estate. In this stretch of Canal, legend has it, lie the remains of a sunken canal packet boat, perhaps the same one memorialized in verse:

"The chamber maid she ran on deck,
And loudly she did bawl:
There goes my bed and bedding -/
In the Middlesex Kinawl."

12

The 1790 House, North Woburn

This magnificent Federal mansion was constructed between 1790 and 1800 by Colonel Baldwin for his expatriate friend Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford. It was the Colonel's wish that Rumford return from Europe and settle here. Although the Count never returned, the grand design of the house made it the social centre of Woburn and the scene of many soirees and balls. Here was held the ball to celebrate the completion of the Middlesex Canal in 1803. To the rear of the house was a basin on the Canal which allowed the Colonel's guests to alight from their packets conveniently at the back door of the mansion.

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A Ball at the 1790 House

On December 31, 1803, Colonel Loammi Baldwin, Construction Superintendent and Engineer of the Middlesex Canal, held a gala ball here in "Baldwin's Hall" to celebrate the completion of the Canal. With an arched-ceiling ballroom on the second level and a huge reception hall below, the house was the perfect setting for the Colonel's many balls like the one described in verse:

"On New Year's Eve at Baldwin's
Hall / Was held a great and splendid
Ball; / Hand in hand the blooming
pairs / Marched to the house and
walked up-stairs."

14

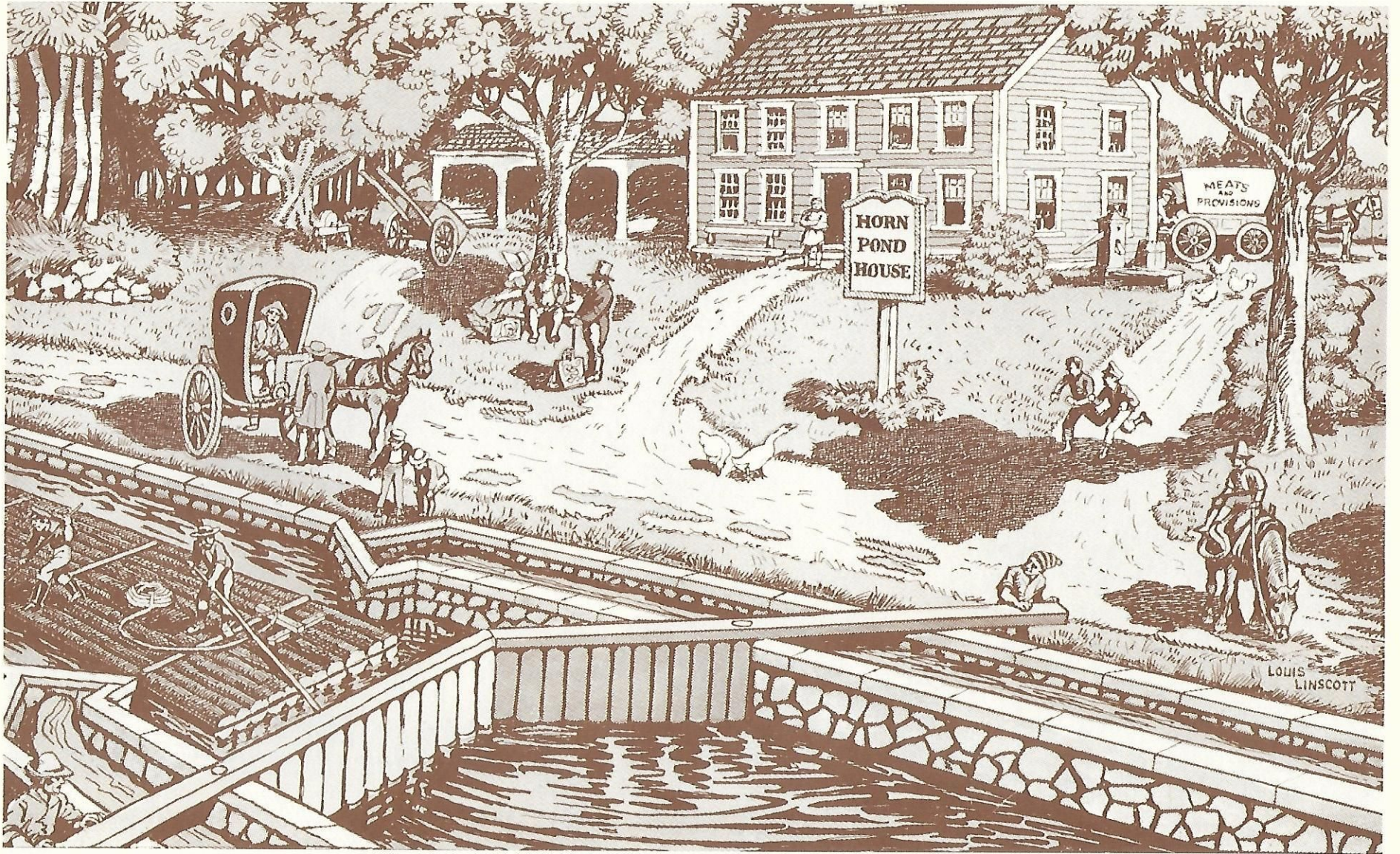
The Baldwin Mansion

In this mansion, which has been moved to the opposite bank of the Canal and which is being restored by the Woburn Historical Commission, lived Loammi Baldwin (1744-1807), the first Superintendent of the Middlesex Canal. His celebrated English garden led down to the banks of the Canal where Colonel Baldwin had his own private landing.





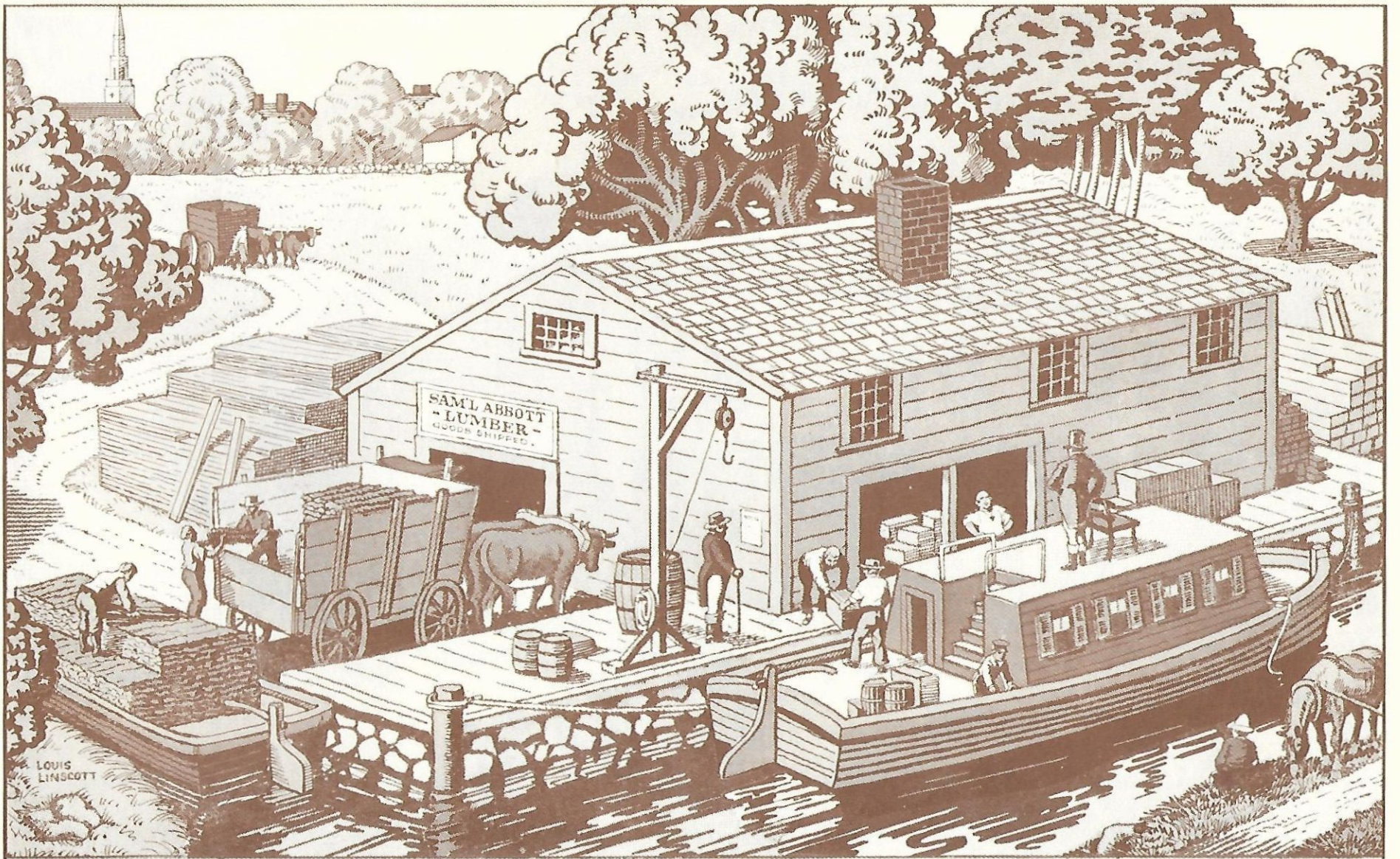
Louis Linscott

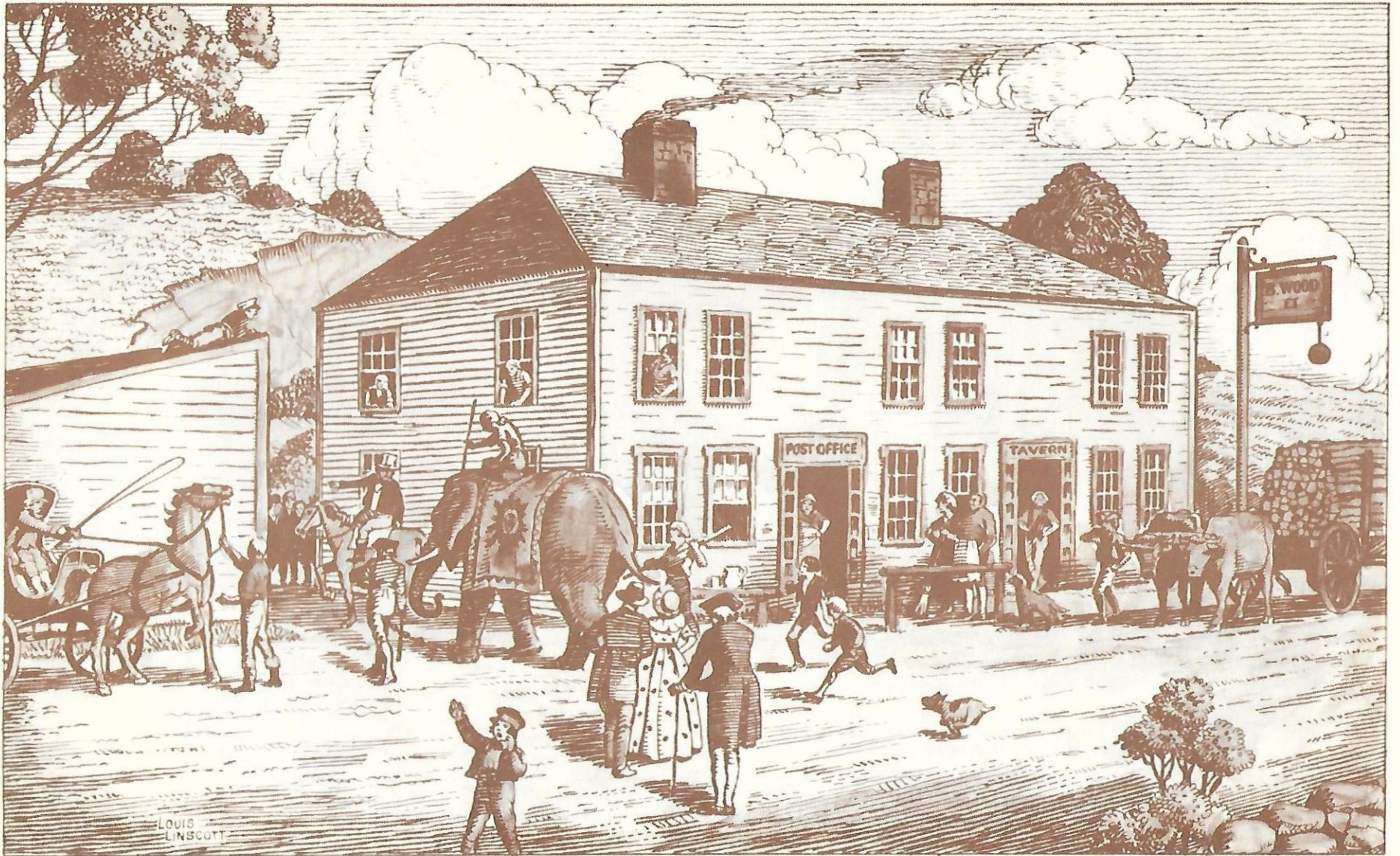


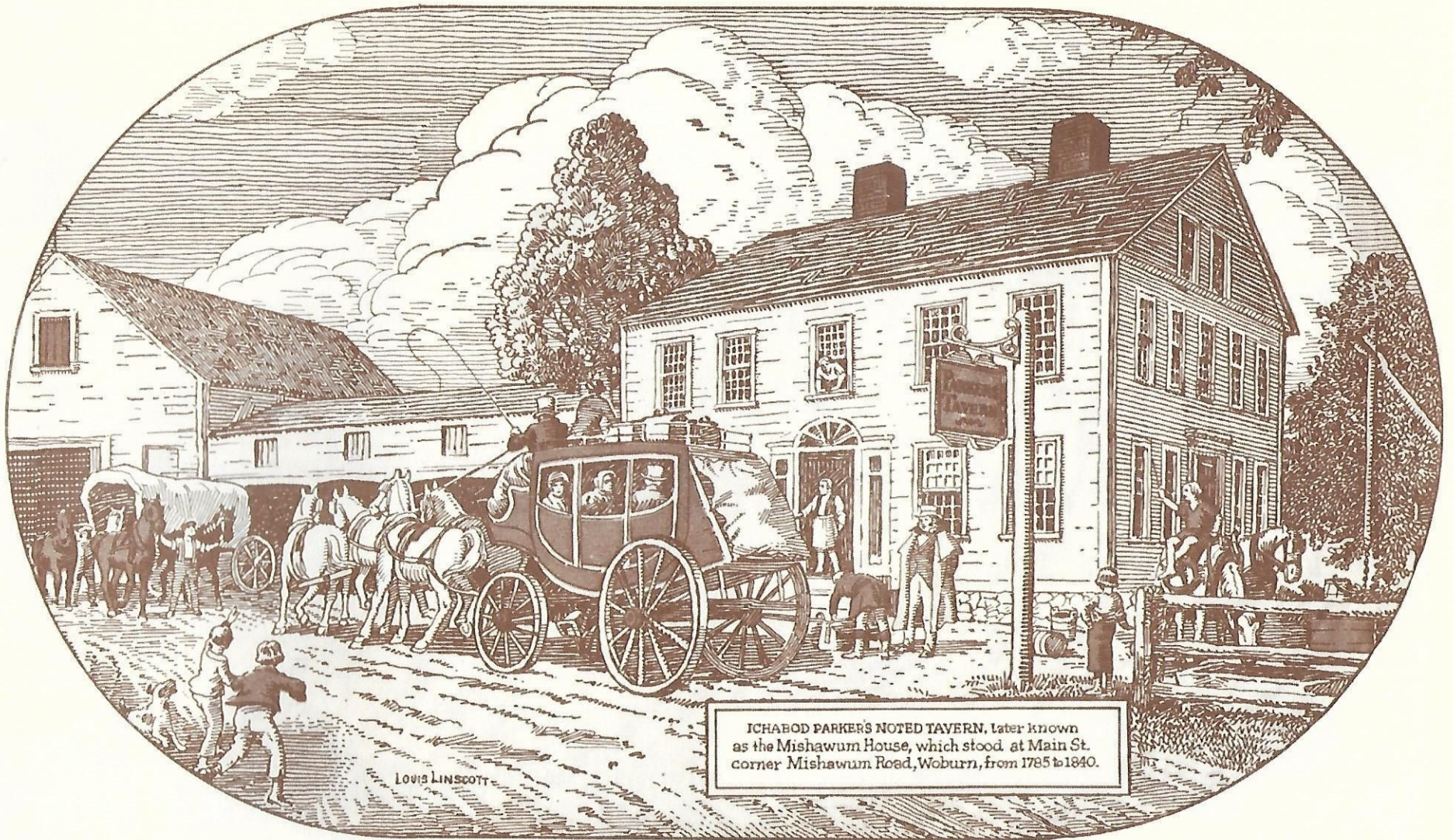


HORN POND ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

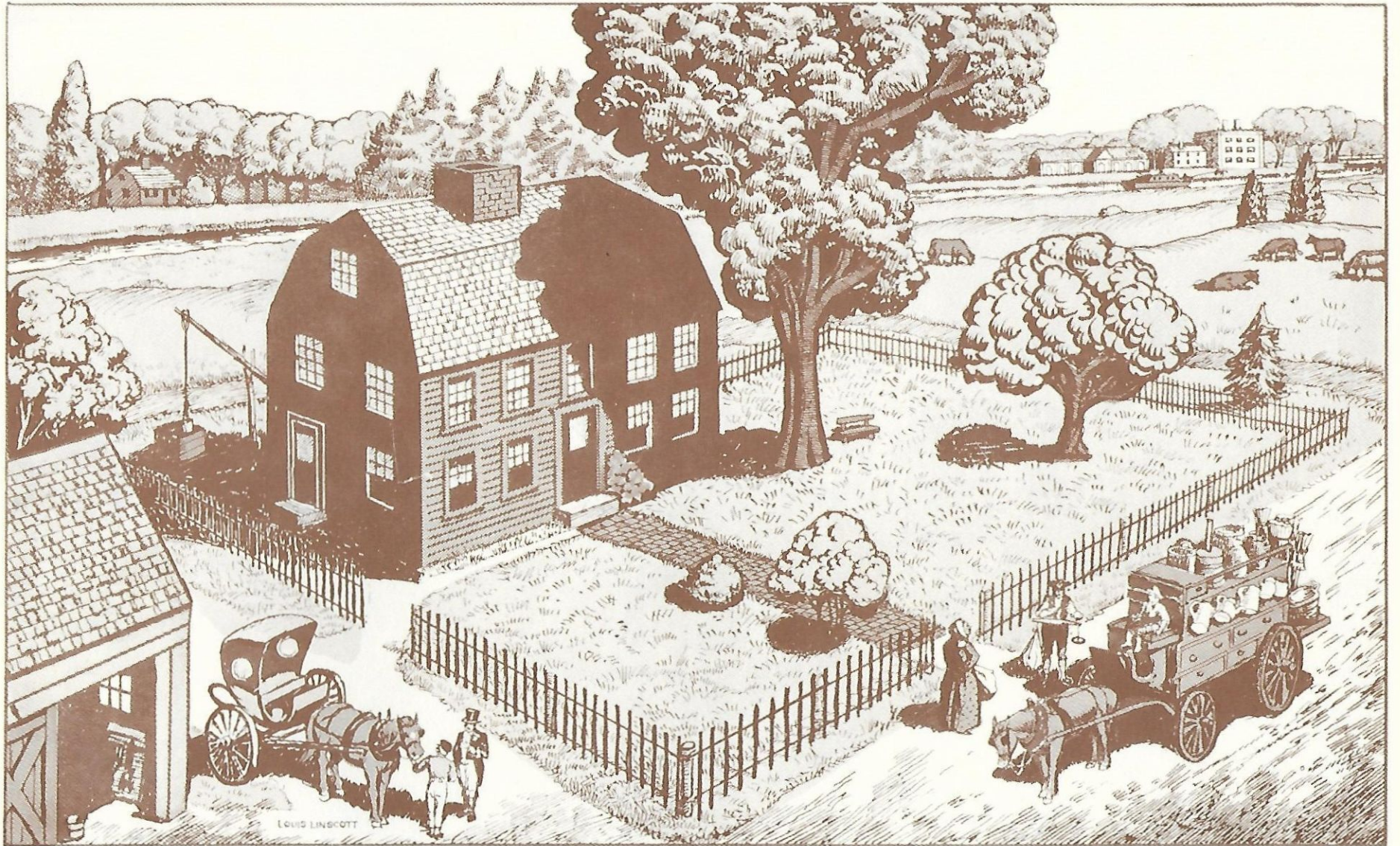
A favorite amusement resort: visitors coming from Boston and adjoining towns by the Middlesex Canal Packet, and by carriages, to spend the day. Boating, picnicking, and a bowling alley on the island, were popular attractions







ICHABOD PARKER'S NOTED TAVERN, later known as the Mishawum House, which stood at Main St. corner Mishawum Road, Woburn, from 1785 to 1840.





LOUIS
LINSOTT



1790 HOUSE
NOWOBURN - SCENE OF MANY BRILLIANT BALLS IN THE EARLY 1800'S

Louis Linscott

