

OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND

*A Quarterly Magazine Devoted to the Ancient Buildings,
Household Furnishings, Domestic Arts, Manners and Customs,
and Minor Antiquities of the New England People*

BULLETIN OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES

Volume LX, No. 4

April-June 1970

Serial No. 220

Editorial Preface

WITH the Spring issue of 1970 OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND celebrates its sixtieth year of publication. For more than a half century the Society's bulletin has sought to emphasize the importance of developing in depth a wide range of subjects related to New England's many-faceted history. These have included pioneer studies by Henry C. Mercer in the analysis of form and function in ancient carpenters' tools and by Harriette M. Forbes in gravestone style and iconography. Charles A. Place contributed the first serious consideration of formal evolution from eighteenth-century meetinghouse to nineteenth-century church in New England, while John Robinson's articles on blue and white "India China," significantly supplemented by later writers, are about to be reissued for the second time in response to scholarly demand.

To mark the sixtieth anniversary of OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND the current issue is devoted to a single subject: the startling and virtually unchronicled development of sawmills in seventeenth-century New England to cope both in commercial and utilitarian terms with

one of the most abundant of all resources discovered by the first settlers in the New World: timber. The relevance of the subject is such that two of the country's leading younger scholars in the field of Colonial history have undertaken independent studies. While their fundamental conclusions are similar, each of these writers explores a different geographic area of New England; each treats his material from an individualistic point of view; each has profited through examination of the other's manuscript in preparation; and each contributes importantly—and with an exciting amount of documentation—to a forgotten chapter in New England's seventeenth-century past.

The impact of this new material should not be limited. There is vital information here for the economic historian in the revelation of unstudied commercial relationships between Europe and the English colonies in North America; for the historian of technology in the delineation of an important industry in its infancy; and for the social historian in the exposition of working habits and reasons which underlay certain patterns of settlement in the earliest years of New England