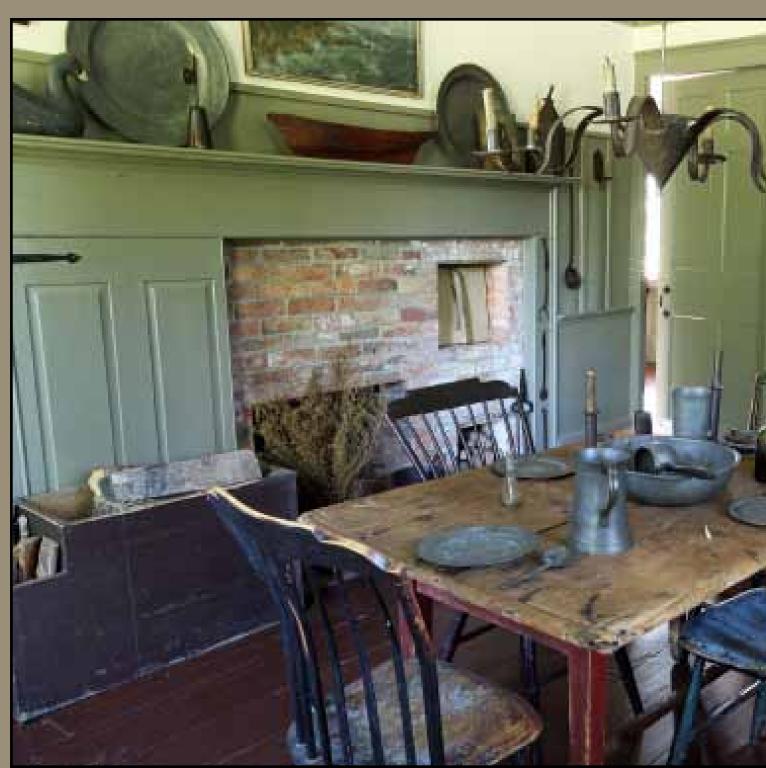
A COLLECTOR AND HIS CLASSIC CAPE

DAVE PROCTOR HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE COLLECTING ORIGINAL-FINISH COUNTRY PIECES, AND ALONG THE WAY FOUND AN IDEAL HOME FOR HIS COLLECTION AND HIMSELF IN A NEW HAMPSHIRE 1788 CAPE COD-STYLE HOUSE AND FORMER TAVERN.

By Gregory LeFever Photographs by Mark Kimball Moulton







In 1802, the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth wrote the unusual line: "The child is the father of the man," explaining how the thoughts of a youngster can influence a man all of his life.

If you're looking for a real-life example in today's world, Dave Proctor may be your man.

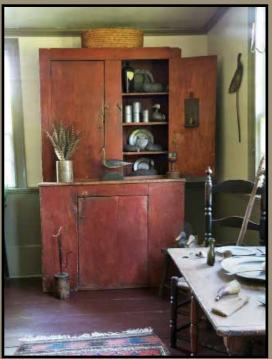
Surrounded in his late-1700s New Hampshire home by a remarkable collection of early country pieces dating from the late 1600s to the mid 1800s, he's quick to tell you about his childhood trips – from the suburbs of Detroit where he grew up – to visit relatives in the rural hamlet of Langside, Ontario.

"It was just a crossroads settlement, and my mother's cousins had four primitive farms up there," Dave recalls. "I was just seven when I began visiting, and I loved it from then on. There was a little general store and a blacksmith shop, and I'd watch the blacksmith, Billy Scott, shoe the horses. The scents and the look of that blacksmith shop are still vivid in my memory."

Left: An early 1800s New England stretcher-base tavern table surrounded by four New England step-down Windsor chairs in original paint creates a focal point for the main tavern room. Dave found the 1840s portrait of a sea captain along Maryland's seacoast, which is where he also found the ladder-back chair from the mid 1700s sitting below the painting.

Above: Above the mantel in the tavern room is a late 1800s painting of the famous Portland Head Light, a lighthouse George Washington ordered that was completed in 1791 at Cape Elizabeth, Maine. On the mantel is a gracefully formed hand-carved hull for an antique model ship.





"This was in the 1950s and there was no plumbing or electricity in those farmhouses. I still love the smell of kerosene from the lamps we used back then. There was wonderful cold water from the well right outside the back door. The heat came from a wood cook stove with vents in the floor to the upstairs bedrooms. I remember falling asleep up there under quilts so warm and heavy that I couldn't turn over."

"I was seven, eight, nine years old and I'd ask anyone – my parents, my grandparents, an aunt and uncle – to take me back to those farms whenever they could. Even as a child, I remember loving the primitive country furnishings of those farms, and I've continued to love that style ever since."

Top: . The circa 1750 Queen Anne chest is from New York State and still wears its original red paint. The frontier painting above the chest dates from 1890 and is copied from an earlier Currier & Ives lithograph. The room's wainscoting is roughhewn and original to the house, as is the built-in cupboard holding some of Dave's antique redware. The tallcase clock visible through the doorway to the entry hall is from 1825, has its original decorative

paint, and was built by clockmaker Riley Whiting of Winchester, Connecticut.

Above: The tavern room's four-door step-back cupboard is a circa-1810 pine piece in original red from a Vermont farmhouse, and was purchased from Massachusetts dealer Steve Cirillo. It holds a portion of Dave's collection of early pewter and some of his circa 1890-1920 handmade decoys.

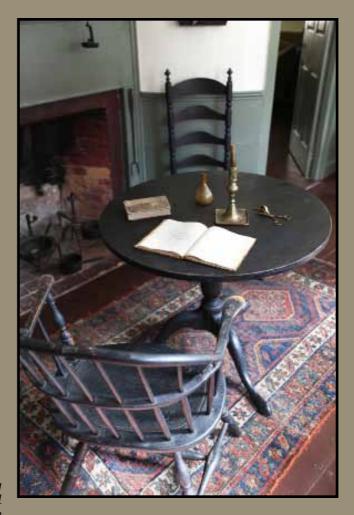
Antiques as a Passion

It would be nearly thirty years before Dave could fully dedicate himself to pursuing his love of early country furnishings. The intervening years were filled with education, then with teaching junior high and high school English and American Literature in his home state of Michigan, then for a stint in Maine, and then back to Michigan to teach at his former high school in Livonia. Along the way he and his wife raised two sons.

Much of his professional life, from 1978 to 2005, was spent as a manufacturer's representative in the fashion industry, selling apparel and accessories in various parts of the country. Around 1980, he began collecting antiques. "For years while I was on the road selling, I'd have two appointments a day – ten in the morning and at two in the afternoon – which gave me time in between to play hooky and look for antiques," he laughs. "Antiques weren't my livelihood, but they were my passion."

From the outset of his collecting, Dave's focus was

Right: A 1700s Queen Anne tea table in the keeping room has a rare single-board top, 33 inches across, and original black paint. A sack-back Windsor chair from the 1770s sits next to the tea table, while against the wall is an earlier ladder-back chair, unusual because it has four slats in its back. The fireplace features the original crane for holding cooking pots.





Left: The circa-1760 stretcher-base table features original red paint. Atop it are clay pipe fragments found nearby, and a pair of early pewter bulbousbottom candlesticks, probably Dutch. Other items include a ladle carved from animal horn, a power horn and a muslin shot bag. A hand-carved sailor's stick rests on one of the late 1700s ladderback chairs with original rush seats, while an early powder horn and circa-1840 leather satchel from Missouri adorn the other chair.





Top: The parlor was constructed in 1788 but the Greek Revival mantel is likely from the 1840s. Next to the built-in parson's cupboard is a Hudson River Valley landscape painting, while the larger painting above the mantel is Scottish, showing a hunting scene. Dave has two prized pieces from his early mentor, Louise Lawton, in the parlor, including the 1700s corner chair in original red paint and the child's six-board Chippendale chest.

Left: A rare candlestick, made of wood but originally painted with brass-colored paint to make it appear more expensive, is from the mid 1700s. Next to it is a 1700s man's embroidered pocket book. Both rest on a primitive X-base candle stand from the same period.

on early, original-surface pieces – unusual during an era when most collectors sought Victorian or traditional early
American pieces and often stripped and refinished them. His attraction back then to country items with their original painted or bare surfaces helped him acquire an impressive collection and launch a successful sideline as a dealer long before the American antique world began to favor country items.

An Insightful Mentor

Two important influences steered Dave toward early country pieces: one was his childhood love of simple rural furnishings, and the other was an extraordinary collector and friend named Louise Lawton.

"My appreciation was formed at a really young age for handmade pieces of the working class and





Left: In the parlor, the black corner cupboard is circa 1775 from the Chesapeake region. Both the original-surface butterfly table from the mid 1700s and the 1730s Hudson River Valley bannister-back chair next to the black cupboard are rare pieces. The painting on the left is French or German and the small one on the right is Scottish, both from the mid 1800s.

Above: Among the items on the parlor mantel are the two bulbous-bottom pewter candlesticks from the mid 1700s, likely of Dutch origin. The English Delft plate is from the late 1700s. They share space with a cluster of stone grapes, similar to the stone fruit on the room's butterfly table, at left.

rural society – pieces that weren't just knocked together, but were created by country craftsmen handy with a wood plane and with a good eye for design," he explains. "I've also always been drawn to repaired items and make-dos because they show both love and need. I was collecting repaired items before they became really popular."

Dave also had an insightful mentor in Louise Lawton. The Lawtons and the Proctors lived in Suttons Bay in northern Michigan during the 1970s and their sons were best friends. "I remember walking into their house for the first time and my head just started spinning because here was what I loved, everything was original-surface early New England and Pennsylvania pieces and all kinds of early folk art," he recalls.

Louise was a prominent collector and had purchased pieces from some of the country's foremost Americana collectors such as Florene Maine and Roger Bacon. "Louise had a wonderful eye for antiques and early surface," he explains. "She'd begun back in the early 1960s buying the things we're still buying today. I still have the first piece I ever bought from Louise – a six-board chest with its original snipe hinges and original red paint – which is pretty much what I'm buying today, except now I'm having to pay more and the pieces are much harder to find."

Finding the Cape

For a number of years, Dave continued purchasing early pieces and upgrading his collection through selling at shows, with his wife as "a supportive and important partner in my antiquing" until 1998. He then moved to an 1860s farmhouse in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and, upon retiring from the fashion industry, devoted himself to antiquing. Six years later, drawn to New England where many of his closest dealer friends resided, he decided to move there and sold his





Left: The tavern dining room is in the 1830 addition to the house. The hearth has its original crane and an assortment of period cooking utensils, including the tin roasting oven, kettles and a large trivet, along with skewers for roasting meats. To the left of the hearth is a rare slat-back child's highchair from the 1700s in original gray paint. Above the hearth are a rare English leather container for liquids and an 1840 plains rifle with tiger-maple stock. The mantel supports a very early cutting board, treen plate and mug, and a wooden barn lantern. The table is a 1730s William & Mary chair table in original brown-black stain from Massachusetts. Near it are four yoke-back bannister-back chairs from 1700s Connecticut. Atop the table are an early burl treen bowl and an unusual make-do candleholder. A rare blue dough box sits against the wall, with an early Connecticut country Queen Anne chair in front of the window. The chandelier is early 1800s with its unusual wooden candle cups.

Below: An early 1800s small portrait of an English gentleman rests on a 1700s leather-bound book on the fireplace mantel.

Virginia farmhouse in a week.

From an apartment in Keene, New Hampshire, month after month he scoured New England for a suitable early cape farmhouse to live in. He wanted "nothing grand or pretentious," but it had to be historically intact. "I bought a laptop and was online every day looking for houses, along with realtors helping me, too," he says. In all, he looked at nearly forty houses. "Many of them had exteriors with plenty of historic charm, but the interiors had been redone, removing the historical integrity," he says.

Then, in June of 2006, his search ended when he found a 1788 Cape Cod-style house that had served as an overnight tavern along an early stagecoach line in Brookfield, New Hampshire. Located thirty miles west of the Maine coast and an hour east of Concord, New Hampshire, it fit his wish list precisely.

"The fact of the matter was that it was an early cape, was in New Hampshire – I kept coming back to New Hampshire as the place I wanted to live – still had its historical features, and it was in line with my budget," he says. "Everything just came together."

Dudley Pike's Tavern

Local records are unclear about the original date of the house, with 1765 as the earliest recorded date of a building on the property. Dave and other local historians believe the date probably relates to an earlier structure, and more than likely the two-story cape was built in 1788. The property also was the site of a two-story general store throughout the 1800s. The earliest recorded owner of the property was Ichabod Richards, who sold the land, house, barn, and the store in 1826 to Dudley Pike, who'd been a part owner of the store.



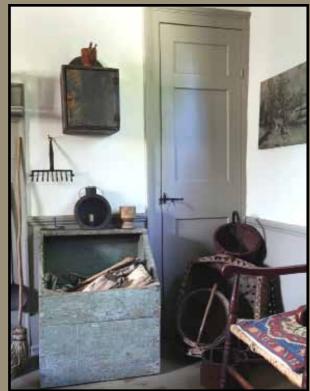
Above: The late-1700s Connecticut dough box in original blue is unusual because of its ornately scalloped skirt. On it, Dave has a hand-carved Pennsylvania weather vane in its original red, white, and blue paint perhaps dating to the country's 1876 Centennial. With it are a treen mug made from a single piece of wood, a smaller treen cup, an early 1700s chip-carved mortar with early pestle, and a wood dough scraper.

Right: An original-surface early book press from Connecticut dealer Sue Wirth sits on an old red sawbuck table, along with a treen sander for sprinkling sand on paper to make ink dry faster. The painting is a Hudson River Valley landscape, and the early divided wall box is in its original red. An early primitive grease lamp hangs next to it.



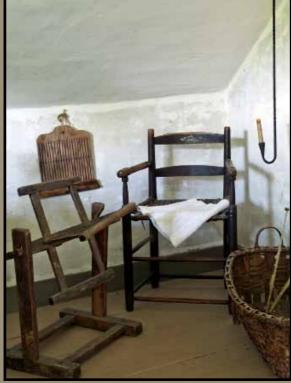


The kitchen is part of the 1830 addition, with Dave's large chair-table from Ohio, surrounded by four circa 1820 bow-back Windsor chairs. The early Massachusetts chimney cupboard has its original red paint, and the circa-1830 green settle-shaped woodbox is from a Maryland farmhouse. The portrait is an American gentleman, early 1800s. Below right is an early green Windsor stool and wooden bowls. Below Left is an original gray woodbox from Vermont and rare round tin lantern.











Two bedchambers occupy the home's loft. Clockwise from upper left are the spare bedroom with an early rope bed and a colonial-style shirt sewn for the nation's 1876 Centennial celebration. Upper right is a collection of weaving tools including an early yarn winder from Vermont, a tape loom, and an unusually long hanging loom light. Dave's deceased sister wove the runner resting on the circa 1830s weaver's chair from Maine. At left is the master bedroom with its early cannonball rope bed in original red.

Pike had plans for the property. Because the property was on a stagecoach route, he decided to convert part of the house into an overnight tavern. Around 1830 he added two more rooms on the ground floor and built a two-story carriage house connected to the barn behind the house, providing more room for guests and a place to stable horses and park carriages. As for the store, he dedicated most of it to selling provisions for taverns, including his own and several others springing up along the area's growing network of coach routes.

Even though the interior of the house has retained its original layout, fireplaces, and its earliest woodwork, the actual uses of the rooms remains uncertain. "From what we've learned about taverns of the day, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what rooms the family used and what ones were dedicated to guests," Dave explains. "These taverns were not full every night, but sometimes they were. So the families had to make do, sometimes giving up some of their living quarters to accommodate their guests."

The main tavern room was at the front of the house, to the right of the front door, and the tavern's dining room was located in the next room toward the rear of the house, between the main tavern room and the kitchen. "In this house, we believe the Pike family would've used the tavern kitchen as their own, too, and they would've shared the tavern dining room with their guests," he adds.

The most ornate room was to the left of the front door, across the entry hall from the main tavern



Left: The spare bedroom has an early 1800s slave bed Dave purchased in Virginia and a late 1600s chair from eastern Massachusetts.

room, and was considered the parlor. "Women weren't allowed in the main tavern room in those days, so they likely spent their time in the parlor," Dave explains. "It's also possible that at times the parlor may have served as a sleeping room."

A keeping room extends across a portion of the rear of the house, and was likely reserved for family use. The upstairs loft has two bedchambers – the home's only rooms without fireplaces. "Back then, it wasn't like today where you walk into a hotel and have a room to yourself," Dave continues. "It was common practice in the bedchambers that two or three strangers might share a bed. In this house, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly where the family slept and where the guests may have slept, although it probably depended on how many guests there were at a given time."

Legends and Lore

In Brookfield, Dave's property is on Wentworth Road – with a section known locally as Governor's Road – named after John Wentworth (1737-1820), a Tory who served as New Hampshire's first governor after the colony broke away from Massachusetts and its only governor while New Hampshire was still under British rule.

Some local lore concerns a massive lilac bush growing between Dave's house and the road. It seems Governor Wentworth obtained many lilac slips from England and had them planted along the road between his mansion in Portsmouth and his summer estate in Wolfeboro, built in 1771, with that route including Wentworth Road. The governor is said to have enjoyed the springtime lilac fragrance as his carriage rolled along the road, at least until colonial soldiers in June of 1775 chased him out of New Hampshire.

"The lilacs were planted about twenty years before this house was built, which is another indication that an earlier dwelling may have existed here," Dave explains. "The lilac's trunks are immense and very old. I've had strangers come up and say to me, 'Do you know about your lilacs?"

An early 1800s stone wall separates Dave's property on the north from the stately circa 1840 Brookfield Town House, the white clapboard municipal building where the annual town meetings have been held continuously for nearly 180 years. "Back then it was common for taverns to be located near the town house, just as this one was," Dave says. "It gave people a place to go after



There's another local legend about the tavern discussed in a 1999 town history of Brookfield by local author Carolyn Chase, called "Our Yesterdays." According to the account, one night in 1842 as Pike's wife Adeline was ready to give birth to the Pikes' son, there was a knock at the front door. A traveler wanted a room for the night, but the Pikes turned him away because of the commotion surrounding the pending birth. The story goes that the traveler was Franklin Pierce, who had resigned his U.S. Senate seat in Washington to return to his wife, family, and law practice in Concord. A decade later, Pierce became the nation's fourteenth president, and the tavern consequently gained notoriety as the inn that turned away the future president.

In any case, Dudley Pike's Tavern thrived. Travelers paid 50 cents a night to stay at the tavern, 25 cents for a meal, and another 25 cents to stable a horse for three nights. By 1850, he was listed as one of Brookfield's wealthiest men, with his property exceeding \$2,000 in value.

Pike's wife died in 1851 and he sold the tavern and store to a man named Luther Cate. Pike himself died in Boston in 1869 and was buried back in Brookfield next to his wife. Upon buying the property, Cate closed the tavern and reverted the house to a private residence, which is what it has remained to this day. The store building was torn down in 1919, but the house, barn, and carriage house have remained standing on the property.

"The house has never been derelict. It's been lived in continuously, mostly by working-class people," Dave explains. "The benefit is that nobody apparently had the wherewithal to modernize it. Nobody came in with a wrecking bar."

Returning to the Source

Dave's immediate focus upon buying the house was to upgrade its basic systems, including heating, electrical, and plumbing. He then stripped layers of wallpaper from interior walls, repaired the origi-

Opposite Page: The yard in front of Dave's house had a circular driveway during its days as a tavern, where stage-coaches and carriages unloaded passengers at the tavern's front door, still with its granite doorstep slab. The 1788 portion of the house is in front, and the 1830 addition extends toward the back on the right side of the structure. The main tavern room is to the right of the front door and the parlor to the left.

Right: The 1830 carriage house is the two-story structure on the left, connected to the earlier barn. Dave says the property's oldest surviving window glass is in the barn.



Dave Proctor Brookfield NH 03872 daveproctor11@gmail.com 540-570-0540 nal plaster, and painted them off-white. Nearly all of the woodwork throughout the house was white, which he replaced with a palette of early gray, mustard, and muted green – all authentic colonial-era colors subtle enough to provide an effective backdrop for his early painted furniture and folk art.

When he removed the wallpaper in the two upstairs bedchambers, he found the plaster appealing in its uncommon roughness, so he kept it that way. Likewise, the wainscoting in the tavern room is roughly planed, which he preserved. Another original feature is the number of small built-in cupboards in three of the rooms – the one in the parlor being an authentic "parson's cupboard" for storing spirits for a parson's visits – and a large built-in in the tavern room that may have been part of the cage bar.

Though the house originally was built in the late 1700s, the overall interior design feels predominantly 1810 to 1830. "The wainscoting and the windows all have an early 1800s feel about them," Dave says, "so even though I buy primarily late 1700s antiques, I've tried to honor the integrity of the house by also collecting pieces appropriate to the period when the tavern would have been operating."

All of which is consistent with Dave's lifelong journey. "I developed my love of New England traveling through here in the 1960s," he says. "For now, I'm exactly where I want to be because I've always felt at home in the more rural, primitive settings than in larger urban ones. This is the New England I wanted to return to – a place that reminds me of those farms back in Ontario a long time ago."

Editor's Note:

Dave has expressed the wish that this piece be dedicated to the loving memory of his best friend, Bradley David Otto, who passed away so suddenly on June 19th, 2013. "Brad loved this old tavern, our time together at the Museum of Appalachian Show in 2012, meeting so many great people there, and he lived daily the values that he found in simplicity. His untimely passing will be forever mourned by me and many others."

