

Pastimes of Former Days

"One of the most successful and interesting yearly events [in Granville] was the alternate union of East and West Granville, for the purpose of celebrating the Declaration of Independence.

Everybody attended, and the town was alive with people. Gingerbread, oysters and other delicacies were sold in side tents and booths , with plenty of candy and peanuts for the [children].

Arches were thrown across the street and when the procession from West Village was nearing, it was escorted by the band to the church. Flags were flying, bells were rung, and the old cannon which, on this yearly occasion, began its uproar at precisely twelve o'clock, midnight, joined again in welcome.

A long bower, made of poles covered with evergreen, was built on the green beside the [Congregational] church [now the Old Meeting House], and beneath this a table was spread, laden with food, so that none were allowed to hunger."

Transcribed from *The North Star*, August 1896

Author: Not indicated in the text but attributed to Alfred Goodrich, Granville, Massachusetts

Transcribed by RLR, 2021

From the collection of the Mabel Root Henry Historical Museum at the Granville Public Library, Granville, Massachusetts.

Notes:

1. The reference to "the green" is to the church green near what is now the Old Meeting House (the former First Congregational Church). Today people think of the green as being the open space between the Country Store and the library, which in 1896 was the location of a hotel, stable, homes and a blacksmith shop.

2. The word "alternate" in the first paragraph seems to suggest that this event may have alternated locations between the East and West Granville Congregational Churches, although the story only describes the East Granville (now known as Granville Center, being the general area around Town Hall and the Old Meeting House). Does anybody know if the event alternated between East and West Granville?