

# The Doe Farm

formerly known as the Moat Farm

## Doe House and Barn

Nicholas Doe left England sometime before 1663 and in 1668 moved his family to Oyster River, purchasing the Martin Farm in the Lubberland neighborhood on Great Bay. After his death, Nicolas' eldest son John elected to give his younger brother Sampson the established farm.

John Doe (born 1669) built his new farm c.1700 at this site by Moat Island on the Lamprey River. His farm was 130 acres on land inherited from his father. The size of the Moat Farm varied during the six generations it was owned by the Doe family. A trail leading northeast from the house site was formerly the road to the farmhouse at Laroche Farm, once part of the Moat Farm.

The Doe farmhouse was a full Cape style with a massive central chimney, its foundation can be seen in the cellar hole, in the woods just beyond the kiosk.



There are no known images of the Doe farmhouse. Shown above is the 'David Davis house' in Durham. Built c.1710, it is a full-Cape style with no shutters or dormers. It gives a fair idea of what the original Doe farmhouse probably looked like.



The cellar hole of the Doe farmhouse, with the foundation of the massive central chimney.

## Town of Durham, 1909

Upon his death in 1909, Olinthus Newton Doe left his farm to Durham in trust for the benefit of the common schools (grades 1 through 8).

The population of Durham was about 850 residents. College students were not counted as residents until the 1950 U.S. Census. In 1909, Durham had only 219 voters, as the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, was not ratified until 1920.

147 students attended the common or district schools, and 14 students attended high school in Dover or Newmarket.

## From Farm to Forest

During 1841 the Boston & Main Railroad laid track across the Doe farm and built a cattle tunnel under the track near the river so Benjamin Doe could access his land west of the track.

When Olinthus Newton Doe left his farm to the Town for the benefit of the common schools, the land was fields and pastures that had provided food for generations.

The town auctioned the contents of the farm in 1914 and the house and barn burned before 1916. The large barn was northwest of the house, its gable end facing east as was customary, and there were other farm buildings. Today, Doe Farm is about 87 acres, including Moat Island, and mostly forested.

STATISTICAL REPORT FOR THE SCHOOL  
YEAR 1907-08.

Whole number of different pupils registered during the year .....	147
Boys .....	70
Girls .....	77
Whole number of different pupils who attended at least two weeks during the year....	144
Boys.....	68
Girls.....	76
Number of pupils attending high school whose tuition was paid by the town.....	14

'Reports of the Selectmen for the Financial Year Ending February 15, 1909' - DHA Museum



Passenger rail and freight trains pass daily on the tracks bordering Doe Farm.

## Leather Tanning

In addition to farming, the Does also engaged in tanning, cordwaining, teaching, and writing the Doe almanacs.

Tanning was highly regulated during colonial times due to the importance of leather, used for breeches, blacksmiths' aprons, saddles, harnesses, bags, buckets, shoes, boots, gloves, caps, shot pouches, trunks, book covers, and more. Benjamin Doe (born 1708) started the Doe tannery, which employed hired men and apprentices.

Soaking pits used by the Doe tannery can still be seen about 800 feet south of the farmhouse cellar on the lower terrace near the river.

Tanning involved scraping, then soaking hides in lime and later with hemlock bark. After the hides were tanned, some of the leather was used to make boots.

A cordwaining or boot-making shop was operated by the Doe brothers during the 1800s. Benjamin Doe (born 1755) sold their boots to the U.S. Army during the War of 1812. The boots were similar to those worn by Hessian soldiers during the Revolutionary War and these boots later evolved to become the American cowboy boot.



Scraping hides, one step in the process of tanning hides and skins



Cowboy boots - mid 19th century

Hessian style boots

## Teachers, Legislators, Selectmen

The generations of Does living at the Moat Farm were well-educated and often worked as teachers, later returning to the home farm. As early as June 3, 1817, Sergeant Ebenezer Doe (born 1758) petitioned the NH Legislature to incorporate Durham Academy, a private high school. He served as town selectman for five terms between 1804 and 1817.

Ebenezer's son Joseph graduated from Dartmouth, taught school and later became a publisher in Boston. His son Benjamin (born 1791) was a teacher of 'mathematics, natural and experimental philosophy, astronomy and languages'. Benjamin was preceptor of Kingston Academy before returning to live at the Moat Farm. Benjamin served two terms as town selectman, two years in the NH Legislature and served for many years on the superintending committee that administered Durham's ten district schools.

Benjamin Doe published 'Doe's Newtonian Almanac' during the 1820s. 'Newtonian' referred to the philosophical and scientific methods of Isaac Newton which laid the groundwork for modern science. Doe also published instructional pamphlets for the teaching of mathematics, land surveying and use of a new improved slide rule.

## Olinthus Newton Doe

Benjamin's son, Olinthus Newton Doe (born 1835), was named for Olinthus Gregory, a British mathematician, author and founder of the Royal Astronomical Society. Olinthus, or Newton as he preferred to be known, also served on the school superintending committee, visiting and evaluating Durham's district schools and teachers.

At that time there were more farms in Durham and town residents owned many more farm animals. The 1909 Town Report lists the types and values of farm animals (right).

ASSESSED VALUATION OF DURHAM.  
APRIL 1, 1909.

Polls, 243.....	\$24,300
Land and buildings.....	500,500
Horses, 314.....	19,253
Oxen, 19.....	1,065
Cows, 395.....	60,753
Other meat stock, 307.....	2,357
Sheep, 241.....	1,205
Hog, 1.....	12
Poultry, 2,660.....	1,030
Carriages, 16, Autos, 8—total, 24.....	8,000
Stock in public funds.....	7,000
Stock in banks and other corporations in the state.....	16,000
Stock in corporations out of the state.....	930
Money on hand, at interest or on deposit.....	750
Stock in trade.....	15,700
Mill and machinery.....	1,300
Total tax list.....	\$11,368.96
Rate of taxation.....	1.85

'Reports of the Selectmen for the Financial Year Ending February 15, 1909' — DHA Museum

## Doe Family Burial Ground

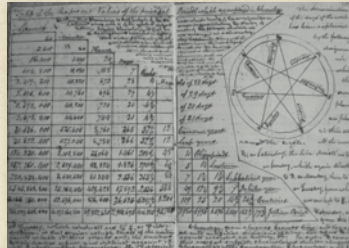
Members of the Doe family who lived and died on the farm were buried about 150 feet south of the house site. There are 11 engraved stones, all dating after 1800. The earlier graves were marked with field stones, the common practice on farms before the 19th century. The town installed an iron pipe fence in 1916.



The Doe family burial ground.



A page from Benjamin Doe's notebook — DHA Museum

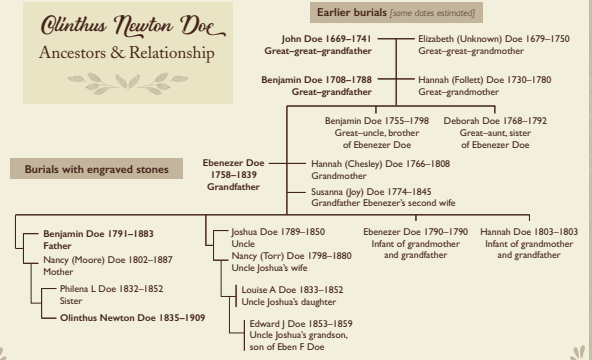


Doe's Newtonian Almanac 1823 — DHA Museum



1806 North District Parents' Petition to Postpone School — DHA Museum

## Olinthus Newton Doe Ancestors & Relationship



Enoch Stevens was a local lad who was apprenticed in 1792 to Benjamin Doe. The top half of the indenture recites that Benjamin Doe was a "Tanner and Cordwainer."  
— Durham Historic Association Museum

