



THE CREAMERY, Route 7, Shelburne

30 An early Shelburne Creamery was located at Shelburne Falls. It operated from a two-story wooden building to which it moved about 1904, situated on the east side of the road. Before that a previous location had been near the Falls bridge. Across from the creamery was a general store, conducted in 1869 by George Curry who lived in the first house to the left traveling east after crossing the covered bridge at the Falls. Many subsequent proprietors continued a general store at this same location, among them Thomas Thompson, Allen F. and William Bacon, Albert Couture, Frank Galipeau and at present Richard Shaughnessey and Richard Valley.

Michael Thompson for many years was the creamery manager; he was considered an excellent butter maker. The creamery, whose patrons came mostly from Shelburne, also made cheese. A great loss occurred when the building was leveled by a fire caused by hot coals that ignited outside the building. After the conflagration, stockholders decided to erect a larger and more modern building. Land was purchased April 24, 1919 at the north end of the village on the west side of Route 7 from Henry H. and Blanche P. Harrington. On July 22, 1954, additional adjoining land to the north was purchased from Mrs. Harrington. These properties were a very small portion of the acreage originally owned by Mr. Harrington's ancestor, Benjamin Harrington (see page 23).

The creamery building was constructed by an area contractor, its basic design English Tudor, including not only the facade, but all four walls. With the railroad passing at the rear of the building, the location proved propitious. The creamery laid tracks for its own spur and at one time owned more than one railroad car. In the early years, milk was cooled by ice and shipped in cans, the ice from the head of Shelburne Bay being harvested by Thompson Brothers and stored in an ice house. Later, insulated railroad cars carried the products to metropolitan areas. Eventually huge stainless steel tank trucks collected the milk at the farms and transported it.

Carl Chittenden Fletcher, a gentleman farmer and local resident, served as first manager of the new creamery facility. Annually for many years stockholders were treated to a noon-day meal served in the Woodman's Hall at the Falls and later in the new Town Hall. Ladies of various town organizations used the dinners as fund-raising affairs for their service projects. Often the menu included a fish chowder, crackers, pickles, coffee, doughnuts and cheese, with the creamery furnishing the dairy products. Michael Thompson was famous for his chowder and the ladies assisted him in making it. The chowder was stored in milk cans until serving time; no count exists today of the number of cans used, but we do know that one year 1032 homemade doughnuts were

consumed.

Stockholders had expected that the new modern plant would draw more patrons from outside the Shelburne area, but this proved not to be the case and the creamery fell into financial difficulties. For several years thereafter, the H.P. Hood Company rented the facility and produced cottage cheese there, but finally the local milk was sent elsewhere and the establishment closed about 1960.

The building stood idle, its drab exterior deteriorating. Often rumors of its demolition circulated among the townspeople. In August of 1962, however, it was purchased by Leslie W. Horton, then a year later he sold to August J. and Rose Myers. They disposed of property to the north of the creamery building in 1966 to the Howard National Bank for a branch bank and finally sold the creamery building and remaining land to Shelburne Offices, Inc.

Rescue and rejuvenation came through the vision and efforts of Beaudin-Moulton Associates, architects and planners, who saw the structure's possibilities. Together with Dr. Robert A. Holden and Dr. Richard A. Ryder, Shelburne physicians in Internal Medicine, they formed the corporation called Shelburne Offices, Inc. They were soon joined by psychiatrist Dr. Nanci-Ames Curtis and optometrist Dr. Hayes Sogoloff.

Renovations commenced October 1970 in charge of the firm's late partner, Walter Moulton. Following his death, administration of the project was taken over by Dorwin Thomas, another officer of the firm. Raymond Drolette was the general contractors.

The building's original use is preserved by

its fitting name, The Creamery. It contains 10,000 square feet on four levels. External staircases, protected from the elements, were added to both front and rear, conserving interior space. Existing window locations and types were revised and relocated. The Tudor half-timbering of the upper level and other trim was removed and the entire exterior given a new stucco finish. Unused attic space created the entirely new fourth level which can be reached by outside stairs and by an inside spiral staircase of wrought iron. Throughout the building, the modern interiors contrast pleasingly with the exposed beams of the old existing truss frame.

Even before completion of the remodeling project, the building's offices were fully rented, with the following firms and professionals as tenants: Drs. Holden, Ryder, Curtis and Sogoloff; Jeanne A. Goldstein, Ph.D. (child and family psychologist); Fred Macks, general manager of the Paul Revere Life Insurance Company; Bio-Tek Instruments, Inc. (health, research and education); Beaudin-Moulton Associates AIA (architects, planners); O'Brien's Walk-In Beauty Shop; the Yarn Cellar, now located in the Shelburne shopping park; and Everyday Book Shop.

The large paved parking lot in front of the building contributes to the desirability of the offices and convenience of visitors and the attractive landscaping adds a harmonious note to the pleasant approach.

Once again Shelburne residents are as proud of the Creamery as they were in 1919 when a new building in the town was a rarity.