

RICHARD KEMP MEMORIAL PARK



As an outcome of the settlement of the Richard Kemp estate, that included his antique truck collection, the town was given the ownership rights to one half of the John Kemp property on River Street that borders on the north side of the Contoocook River. This property includes the sites of the historic Pierce barbecue oven, the location of his presidential nomination celebration, the Kemp Cider Mill, the Richard Kemp Truck Collection, the Hanson Cottage and a World War II vintage aircraft spotters hut.



The acquired site is contiguous with other Hillsborough Town property, making the Town the owner of all land along the north bank of the Contoocook River from the great stone bridge to below the sewer disposal plant. As a result of the generosity of Mrs. Evelyn Kemp the town acquired the remaining half of the John Kemp property, and the two acquisitions will form the site of the planned Richard Kems Memorial Park that was mandated when the gifts were officially accepted by the Town.



The site is among the most historic location in the community for it was where many of local, state and national leaders gathered to celebrate the nomination of Franklin Pierce as President in 1852. The top photo shows the barbecue oven that was constructed to roast the meat for the occasion. At the right side of the photo is seen the trunk of the elm tree that was toppled by the 1938 hurricane destroying the oven. The stones were scattered about the location and were collected by Richard Kemp and placed in the formation shown in the second photo. It is the intention of the Development Committee to plan for the

restoration of the oven utilizing these original materials to the extent possible.



Also in the planning is a memorial structure that will contain two vehicles that the Town was allowed to select from Richard's vehicle collection before it was sold at auction in the summer of 2008. The Caterpillar snowplow, Big Bertha, shown with Richard in the third photo is one of the actual vehicles that will be on permanent display along with an outstanding

example of an antique Mack Truck.

The Kemp Cider Mill dates back to circa 1870 when it was built and operated by Richard's great grandfather, Benjamin Kemp. Originally it was part of the steam mill that he operated. The cider mill was operated by his son, John, until it was destroyed by the flood of 1936. The bottom photo shows it partially damaged during the period of rising water. The press that was located in the center of the taller structure kept it from being swept away by the rising water. A new mill was built in 1937 and that forms the main part of the extant building. The World War II spotters hut is currently attached to back wall of the mill. The Committee anticipates that all of the structures will be restored and that the Hanson Cottage will be used as a multi-purpose building for the Park. The John Kemp house will be removed.