

# NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MAST ROADS

## What are mast roads?

During New Hampshire's colonial period, the British government claimed the biggest white pine trees for the navy. These massive trees, which were often 2 or 3 feet wide and hundreds of feet tall, were perfect to use as the masts on ships to hold up the sails.

The English settlers in New Hampshire traveled far inland to find these mast trees, sometimes even before any other English people had settled in an area. When they found white pine trees that were big enough, they chopped the massive trees down and dragged them, sometimes with a team of oxen, to the closest river. They would push the trees into the river and then float them downstream until they reached a port, like Portsmouth or Newburyport.

Because it was such hard work to drag the trees through the forests to a nearby river, the workers cut paths in the wilderness that they could use over and over again. When English settlers moved to these areas, they used these paths as roads and sometimes used the word "Mast" in the road or street name to remind them where the road came from.



## Which towns have a Mast Road or Mast Street in New Hampshire?

Dover	Lee
Durham	Manchester
Goffstown	Merrimack



## Notice & Wonder

1. Are there more Mast Roads or Mast Streets in New Hampshire? See if your town has one.
2. Look at the street names in your town or neighborhood. Do any of them provide clues about the history of the area?