

The Little Patties
(From the Ed Foss Collection)

The present wooded condition of the Pawtuckaway Mountain range gives little indication that it was for many years the site of a thriving little community. Once the settlement of Nottingham began in earnest, it was however only a matter of a few years before there were a comfortable number of homes around the Middle Mountain and along Mountain Road south toward Deer Pond. The first reasonably accurate map of Rockingham County made around 1853 shows twelve houses and a schoolhouse in the Nottingham area alone and there were a number of other homes close by in the adjoining town of Deerfield. There was apparently a period of years when the number of residents there declined, and the school was abandoned, but the cycle turned upward again as the town found it necessary to re-establish the school for a time in, or shortly after 1909.

One-third of a mile due north-east of the George Goodrich place, which now is known as the Fire Ranger Station, or "Lookout House", a set of buildings once stood which are noted on the old map as the residence of S.M. Noyes. Later it was to be known as the Shaw place as for years it was the home of a Mr. Shaw, his wife and five daughters. In contrast to other farms around the mountains it was on a sharp and rocky slope, and Mr. Shaw's attention had to center on dairying. The raising of cattle for beef, hides, and the sale of milk products such as butter and cheese was often the only way in which a farmer could manage to see even a bare living from many of the rock strewn farms in Nottingham.

Over the years however the Shaws developed a very specialized variation as their main source of income. Their specialty was the forming of individual butter patties, each pressed into a distinct mold and the retailing of them to the hotels in Portsmouth and Newcastle. At least twice a month

the year round, and weekly in the busy summer season the wagon was loaded and the long trip was made. The molds such as the Shaws used are prize items among antique dealers and collectors. Many such molds were large enough to hold perhaps an ounce of butter. The smaller ones, perhaps holding a half-ounce, and delicately carved with leaves, acorns, birds, or in other designs were most probably used by the Shaws and the finding of such mold is very rare. The enterprise of the Shaws is typical of "Yankee ingenuity".