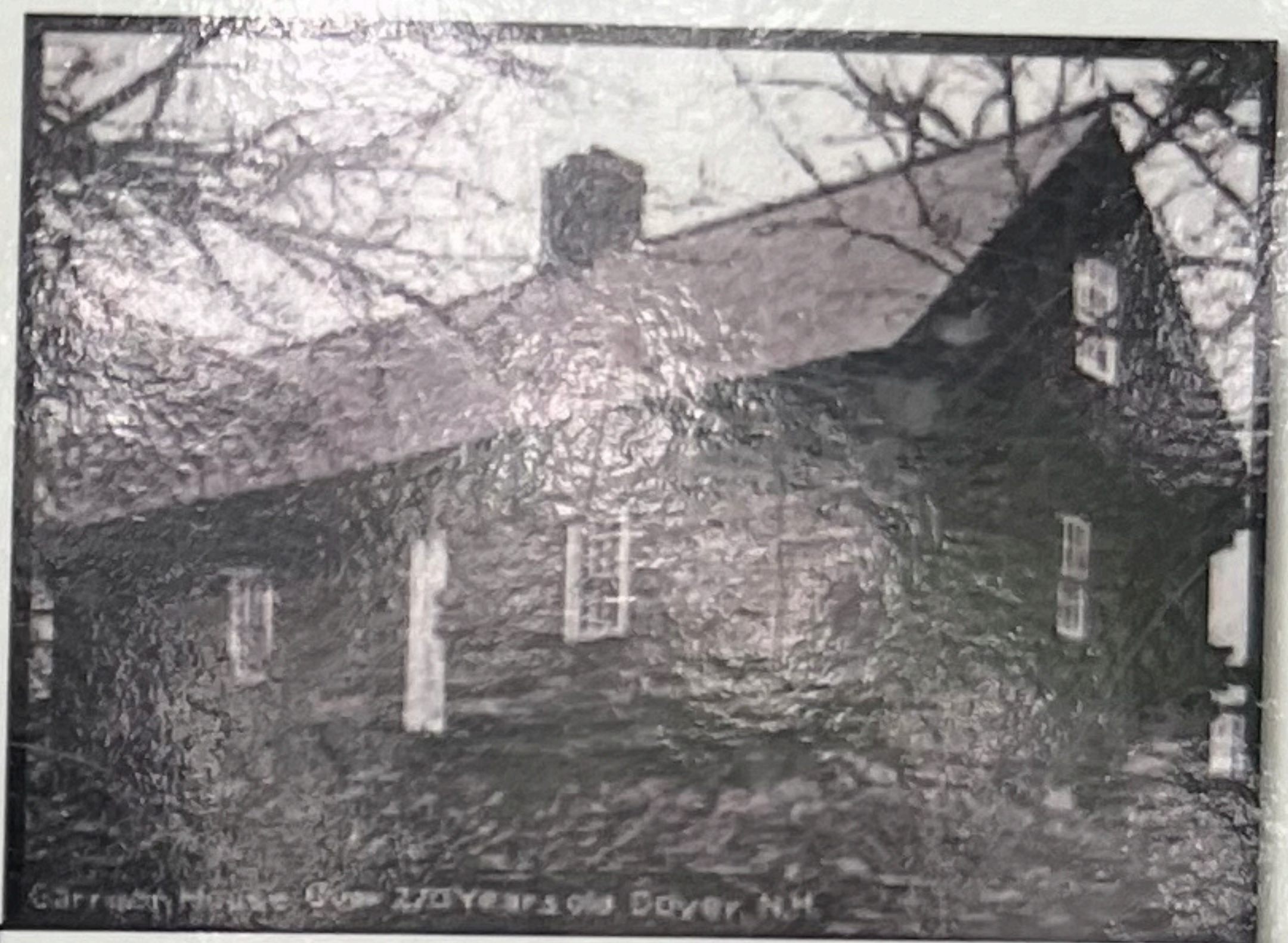




## *The Davis Garrison: Surviving the Massacre*

As you gaze out into the forest that now blankets this area of Wagon Hill Farm, try to imagine what this area used to look like. The Davis Garrison stood where you now look. It was built mostly of wood and stood two stories tall. There was most likely a barn and other small outbuildings around the garrison as well. The pit you see in the ground was not there when the garrison existed. The Davis Garrison, built by John Davis around the year 1655, was placed on this hill overlooking the mouth of the Oyster River.



Damme Garrison –  
[http://www.dover.lib.nh.us/doverhistory/dammegarri  
sonhouse.htm](http://www.dover.lib.nh.us/doverhistory/dammegarri<br/>sonhouse.htm)

Garrisons had two main purposes. They were used for homes, but also as protection. Garrisons were often guarded by soldiers and in an emergency people would go to one for safety. One of these emergencies was called the Oyster River Massacre and part of it happened right where you are standing.

The Oyster River Massacre took place on July 18, 1694 when the Abenaki attacked the English settlers that had set up homes in this area. This attack was caused by several factors. One was the tensions between the French and English, as well as between the settlers and natives. Another major factor was the treaty that some of the Abenaki signed as an attempt to make peace with the English settlers. Not all the Abenaki agreed with this treaty though. With some help from the French, the Abenaki broke the treaty. Over 300 members of the Eastern Abenaki attacked the settlers and burned their homes and crops. At least five garrisons were burned, 104 settlers were killed, and 27 of them captured. The Davis Garrison was involved in this raid, but miraculously was not destroyed. James Davis, who had inherited the garrison from his father, John, was able to save the garrison during this attack by putting out the flames that started to burn the home. This may seem like a gruesome way to break a treaty, but attacks like this were the way of warfare in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Today you can only try to picture what the garrison would have looked like. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century you could still see some of the remaining stones from the foundation but it was destroyed when the gravel pit was dug here. The gravel that used to hold the ground for the garrison was used to build what we now call Route 4.

Developed and updated by 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Oyster River Middle School

SCAN ME →

