

Upton Tavern

This house which is still standing next the Training field on Centre street was built by Walter Smith, son of James and Margaret (Phillips) Smith, probably about the time of his marriage to Ruth Fuller on June 5, 1717. He was born about 1688 when the Phillips and Smith families were driven away by the Indians, as before referred to in the account of the Phillips tavern. The tavern business was not new to him., {17}as his grandfather and uncle had been tavern-keepers for the Village for many years. However, it was not until he had reached the age of sixty that he applied for a license "in the house where he now dwells," his petition dated Dec. 27, 1748, stating that "there is no innholder who lives within one mile of the Meeting House or training field in said Village nor has been for about 2 years past, which makes the meeting of the Military and Parish Officers & others very inconvenient. That Walter Smith has a license for retailing living near the Meeting House (at the same distance as the Tavern has been for many years till lately) has a house well accommodated to keep a Tavern." On Nov. 15, 1748, the military officers of Salem Village also petitioned for a tavern at Walter Smith's, the petition being signed by Samuel Flint, Nathan Smith, Amos Buxton, Joseph Fowles, Nathaniel Wallis and Peter Twist. Mr. Smith died about 1750, and from 1751-64 the widow, Ruth, was granted license in his place. In 1759, fearing that she would lose her license, she petitioned that she had "kept tavern in Danvers 10 years past, successfully by which she had been enabled to support herself & her children who were left by her husband & pay some of his debts & now being advanced to an age which will not admit of hard labor & being in danger of having license taken away by reason of Taverns being multiplied in Danvers since the house of your petition first obtained license, grant her license for her house which may be as useful and serviceable as any on that road." In July, 1761, the selectmen of Danvers did not approve of Ruth Smith for an innholder, but they did not appear against her. In 1765 the selectmen reported that there "was no necessity of Ruth Smith keeping a public house," but she still persisted, and in 1766, the selectmen made a further attempt to turn her down. "As to Ruth Smith," they said, "the House that she lives in it Cant be wanted for an Inn for it is but about a (Quarter of a mile above Cross & about One mille & a quarter below Small & all 3 of them on the road called Andover Road, admit that there was a necessity of a Tavern there, Mrs_ Smith has not a Convenency for, Owning & Improving but half the House where her late Husband Dwelt & kept his: . Tavern and admit that there was a Conveniency and a N ecessity of a Tavern where she Dwells,_ Mrs. Smith could not be allowed by us Neither has she been allowed by our Predecessors for a considerable number of years Past as a Person suitable for such an Employment for she is about 70 years old.'" {18}She obtained a license again in 1767 and 1768. Her son, Walter Smith, was licensed as a retailer in 1766-1773 and as .an innholder in 1784-86. The house was mortgaged by Smith to Weld Gardner of Salem, who sold it on April 26, 1791, to George Upton of Danvers.

Tapley, Hariet S. "Old Tavern Days in Danvers." Historical Collections of the Danvers Historical Society, v. 8. Danvers, Mass: Danvers Historical Society, 1913.