

## 1999 - YEAR OF THE MOVE

Future generations will have the story of the century- the year Madison voters agreed to move the Silver Lake Town Hall to a new location more than a mile east a long route 113. We all turned out, youngsters just old enough to have the memory of the event, and oldtimers who never expected to see that three story building leave its location by the sidewalk on land given by Henry Forrest's grandfather Newell. Archives will record by moving pictures and diary, newspaper and oral history the Sunday morning, August 23 when we thronged the road to witness the ponderous and strangely silent movement of the hall on its huge truck bed, preceded by crews removing dozens of

telephone and power lines crisscrossing the way.

The following background is taken from the 1976 Old Home week brochure and from painstaking research done by Mary Lucy.

This building was erected during 1904-1905 being the first year the building was listed on tax records. As a result of the decline in membership of the Lodge, the Charter was suspended on November 23, 1936 and the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire took a mortgage on the property. The building was finally sold to the Town of Madison and the deed passed on March 30, 1946.

And in the Reporter for November 14, 1904, this piece of news in the Silver Lake column:

There will be a ball in the new Odd Fellows hall Thanksgiving night. Proceeds to go toward the

piano fund which was started by Prof. Knowles last winter. He has got the piano, now let everyone be on hand to help pay for it, and have a good time, all in one.

Mary Lucy learned that the Nickerson (from Tamworth) contract for construction was for the first floor only. Zanford Savary completed the building.

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This is the first newsletter from the Madison Historical Society since Becky Knowles published a few issues several years ago. The present hope is that we can publish quarterly. Your editor is Raymond Stineford, current President. If you are a member and do not receive a copy, write to the editor at Box 309, 03849. Submissions are welcome. Ed.

## SOCIETY'S SIGN GETS A FRESH LETTERING

Dwight Ellis has skillfully relettered and repainted our sign on the lawn at the museum. Set up several years ago, it was time for renewing. Dwight used a letter style similar to what he designed for the Atkinson Park sign across the road.

Our building is owned by the Town, and many residents remember when it served as the original town hall. Basket ball was played there, and the court markings are still visible. Originally, a porch extended across the front of the building; later it was closed in to include chemical type toilets. The vent pipes were visible until the new roof was put on in late 1999. Research to date indicates that a partial cellar was excavated some years after the building was constructed in 1884. At that time a furnace was installed. Apparently the original source of heat was from a woodstove on the stage, perhaps on the north wall where the chimney (now removed) for the furnace was located. In future issues we hope to provide more information on the construction of this building and our newly renovated town hall. All our

readers are invited to submit any information they may have.

## HISTORY IN ANECDOTE

Perhaps you have a story to share in the vein of this one from Earle Knowles. He tells of the time when his grandmother followed her usual habit of getting into the back seat of the Model T touring car while it was still parked in the barn. Her husband would back it out and head down the driveway toward what is now route 113. On this occasion he backed out but failed to swing the automobile toward the driveway. Instead, he backed all the way down the sloping lawn toward the railroad tracks, fortunately stopped by lilac bushes. Newell Forrest, Henry Forrest's grandfather, came with a team of horses to pull the Model T back up the slope. And Grandmother Knowles never again would get in until her husband had the car squarely headed toward the road. (Earle's grandfather built the Peak House on Mt. Chocorua. Great-granddaughter Becky has presented fascinating material in programs to appreciative audiences.)

## MRS. MARY ERWIN HOBBS- Madison's 19th Century Poet

In the library of the historical society is a book of poems written by Mary Erwin, daughter of John and Lydia Boynton Erwin, born in Bethany New York. She "became the wife of Josiah Howard Hobbs, Esq., of Madison New Hampshire on January 5, 1878." She died "in the presence of her family, friends, and physicians, after a few hours of unconscious sickness occasioned by an attack of apoplexy that suddenly seized her on the previous evening near the close of an assembly in Odd Fellows Hall at the village of Silver Lake in Madison."

She left many poems, some of them written for special events. Here are some opening lines of "Presentation Poem," "to Mrs. Trafton of Madison, N.H."

We have gathered from  
the village,

From the hamlet and the  
town,

We have gathered from  
the country,

From the hillside bleak  
and brown,

From the mansion in the  
distance,

From the cottage warm  
and bright,

O'er the plain and through  
the valley,

We have come to you  
to-night.

Where they all come is  
not indicated in the poem,  
but perhaps the  
destination was the  
parsonage, since her  
friends came with "just a  
few articles purchased with  
pounds and pennies....for  
our pastor's gentle wife."

The book was given to  
the Madison Historical  
Society in 1959 by Joseph  
S. Prescott.

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In her book, *EARLY  
HOUSES OF EATON AND  
MADISON*, Helen Prince  
identifies some of the  
dwellings in the towns,  
originally Eaton until 1852,  
built between 1780 and  
about 1850. They are  
representative of the  
typical constructions of  
their periods, with most  
being one story with  
unfinished attic. But  
several were larger, with  
two full stories under an  
open attic through which a  
center chimney reached  
through a ridge timber (or,  
rarely, forward or just  
behind the ridge). Most of  
these houses still stand,  
although very few retain  
most of their original  
features. But they provide  
valuable clues in to

researching the early  
homes now lost through  
decay or fire.

Among the missing are  
those identified only by the  
slumping ground where  
they once stood over  
shallow cellars. During the  
search for the Class VI  
roads the study committee  
discovered many of these  
old locations, most of them  
now grown over by trees  
and heavy undergrowth.

Members of the committee  
had a real sense of the  
past when they came  
upon these fading  
reminders of a "lost  
civilization." Sometimes  
the base of the center  
chimney is evident, a rising  
like leavened dough into  
the cavity of stone wrapped  
depression.

Although  
some bases are clearly in  
the center of the cellar,  
others protrude from one of  
the walls to form a U  
shaped cellar space. Barn  
foundations are sometimes  
also visible, but ells and  
outbuildings often lacked  
cellars. A barn sometimes  
is indicated by stonework  
on the low side of a slope,  
suggesting that the main  
floor lay over an area used  
for manure or storage. The  
Society owns a few  
photographs of these  
vanished buildings, and  
we are always seeking  
additions for our files.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS A TIME CAPSULE CELEBRATION DURING OLD HOME WEEK 2000

The executive  
committee is planning to  
gather contents to place in  
a time capsule to celebrate  
the year 2000. The spring  
issue will provide more  
information, but among the  
contents we hope to  
include essays written by  
our Madison elementary  
students. A special postal  
cancelation design is  
expected to be available to  
"mail"  
communications to readers  
of the future.

FLAG POLE IS  
REPAINTED

Nobody was sure just  
when the pole on the lawn  
in front of the museum was  
last tipped down for  
painting. But it seemed to  
be in need of a fresh coat,  
and the rope was looking  
frayed. Billy Chick and his  
road crew dropped the  
pole late this past fall, and  
Gerald Ward, Roger  
Clayton, and Ray Stineford  
got out scrapers and  
brushes and some put t y.  
It took a few days for each  
coat of paint to dry, but the  
job is done, a new rope  
was run through the  
pulley, and come spring,  
we will have a new flag.

## WHY A HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

Most communities have an organization whose intention is provide continuity between the past and the present, to preserve a record of human events, without which the present time simply "floats" in a space without context, without guideposts to assist in providing values and meaning to community life. Madison's sense of the past, of its history in people and the land remains strong among many residents, both among long timers and newcomers. We have a wealth of untapped memories that need to be

put onto tapes. The process is called oral history, and nowadays it may also include videos. For instance, we have a video history of the moving of the town hall on that memorable Sunday. We have a video, made a few years ago, of school in session here in Madison. We have taped our "Harmon Night," when we devoted a meeting to the history of the Harmons of Madison. And further back in time we got the tapes of some of the Snowville Sketches from the radio days of the 1930s.

But we must continue to put ourselves on record for those who will come after us.

We are not only preserving history. We are making history. You can join us in that exciting project, not only as a member on the books, but as an active participant. You can look through family albums and make copies of early pictures of Madison places and people; or you may have early maps; or perhaps there is a story that needs to be shared. This newsletter can provide a forum for all kinds of history related information and celebration.

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Officers: Pres. Raymond Stineford. vice-Pres. Mary Lucy, Sect. Tammy Flanigan, Treas. Dolores Messner.