

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2001

FIRE TRUCKS AT MUSEUM

Thankfully, they were driven to the scene as part of Roger Clayton's program on the history of the Madison Fire Department. The 1934 truck clearly appeared to be in retirement, but parked by the front walk was a glossy version from the 90s. Passersby must have looked three times at the yard filled with fire equipment, including old fire coats and brass cylinder extinguishers. Roger was one of the program leaders for the best summer of programs I have memory about. This year all programs originated locally, and good attendance is proof that our own history fascinates us as much as the very good programs we have had from the New Hampshire Humanities council.

At another session we made a video tape of a panel of Madison residents who recalled past events, like the fires, the big storms, the rough and tumble baseball games. Someday in the future too far to envision an audience will chuckle as they watch and listen. Perhaps they will be amused not only at the anecdotes, but they may enjoy our presentation of them. We learned about wildlife in Madison from Kathie Gregg, director of the Elaine Conners Wildlife Center. We were

admonished not to look a bird or animal in the eye, and not to talk to these wild creatures, not to make pets of them. It was hard advice, but important to the survival of rehabilitated animals.

We learned from Mary Lucy about graveyards, who is buried where - and the human story that ended in a stone with a name on it. Ray Stineford demonstrated early lighting devices at a meeting. Peggy Hoyt told a large gathering about the history of Purity Spring. And so they went, month by month, the showing and telling about a Madison known and loved. Time rolls over us like a great wave.

LETTER TO OUR DESCENDANTS

We write these words to children too young to speak, who have not yet all of their baby teeth, who slept a dreamless sleep on the morning of September 11, 2001, a sunny mild Tuesday in the American Northeast. You did not know that millions of Americans were watching television pictures of their world being changed forever. Yours is the only generation who can grow up clean and fresh and innocent of what we saw. Perhaps the very society in which you are living bears the shape of what we built,

rebuilt, recovered, after New York City lost its twin towers at the hands of cruel persons who plotted to destroy our very way of life.

We pray that they have failed. You will hear stories of how we watched and wept, yes, and cursed and looked at each other in disbelief that THIS COULD HAPPEN. But it has happened. Churches and stadiums filled with crowds who came to seek comfort and peace. As these words are written we do not know how we will move on. We only know that we must - for your sake as well as for our own. If you live in a country where love abounds, and hope and justice - that will be the legacy we are striving to leave you.

PEQUAWKET HISTORICAL LEAGUE MEETING

At a meeting hosted by the Bridgton Historical Society at their 1797 farmstead, Narramissic on August 14th, members of many historical societies gathered for their quarterly meeting.

Changes in the By-Laws were proposed, to be voted at the November meeting. It was suggested that members bring to the next meetings descriptions of their best meetings.

A DAY AT WILLOWBROOK

The outing to this large Newfield, Maine village setting, circa mid-1800s resulted from Roger Clayton's discovery of the World War II bicycle at the Madison dump (a.k.a. Transfer Station). Roger brought it home, cleaned and renovated the parts (the most interesting feature was that it folds into a compact package), and when he decided to donate it to Willowbrook he took Earle Knowles and Ray Stineford with him. The two wheeler is English, painted army olive, and was used as part of the English transportation system during the war.

Roger, Ray and Earle spent the day touring this grand scene (as much as we had time for). Farm machinery used a hundred years ago - balers and corn reapers and seed planters; and one lunger engines; fancy horse pulled conveyances for Sunday rides; buggies for town business; and a glassed black hearse for life's final errand: building after building with huge appliances for agriculture, for cutting wood, making ironware, dozens of inventions of the age, designed to help the farm family get more accomplished with less effort in less time. At mealtime, members could gather in a suffocatingly overstuffed parlor, open to visitors, following dinner at a table where the platters and plates held all a body could eat - a whole tableful of bodies.

We lunched at a simple restaurant setting. I told some old gents that we had been let out for the day, but

had to be back by three o'clock. Somehow, the smart remark seemed to sum up the experience of being transported back in time. Before we left, Roger and Earle checked out a contraption that was supposed to roll down the road like a car, then lift and fly. It never did, but it is a testimony to ongoing curiosity about inventing yet another mousetrap. They had already put Roger's bike in that part of the exhibit. Just why it resides near a would-be flying machine is more than we could understand. Anyway - if you want to look back to the era of your great-grandparents, take this 45 minute ride there - route 153, then watch for signs of Newfield.

I didn't have the energy to see the bike's new home. It was nearing three o'clock when I climbed into Roger's four-wheeler to nap.

RED SCHOOLHOUSE TO STAY

The Madison School Board and the Madison Historical Society members agree that the old building will stay where it is - having traveled enough through the years. The availability of the building, which has heat and plumbing, will make winter meetings possible.

Engineering reports call for extensive repairs to be made. Our next winter issue will include more information.

The Museum will close for the winter after the October meeting.

MADISON CORNER

Recollections of Leon O. Gerry

The following account was written about 1961. No updating has been added.

My first recollection of Madison is in the late 1890's, when my father ran the store and we lived in the big set of buildings to the west of the store. Both the store and other buildings were owned by Langdon M. Atkinson, who occupied rooms over the store. Since those days Arthur W. Tyler put an addition on to the west end of the store building and some dormer windows in the upper story. The house was of two stories with an ell to the northward to connect with the big barn. The front yard was enclosed by a white fence, there were large maple trees in front of the house and a big horse chestnut tree close to the southeast corner. Between the house and the parsonage were several large apple trees, which bore considerable fruit. The store caught fire one morning from a too hot fire that Lang Atkinson built upstairs: but as it happened just as men were going to work at Mrs. Schmitt's and the brook was full of water, the fire was put out without very much damage. The house and barn burned sometime around 1914, when John H. Burke lived there, and later Fred Clayton built the house which his widow occupies, just about on the site of the old house. The old split, or rather dressed stone steps, which was at the end of a cement-like granolithic perhaps, walk which led from the middle of the piazza across the

THANK YOU

The officers of the Madison Historical Society will be losing the secretary before the end of the year. Tammy Flanigan has served us faithfully for some time. New obligations require her to resign her monthly record keeping for us. Kathie Gregg has indicated an interest in filling the vacancy. We hope she will. Kathie is well known as our Madison correspondent for area newspapers.

CHAMBERLAIN HALL
MOUNTAINVIEW, N. H.
FEB 14/1916

The Silver Lake Association Dramatic Will present for the benefit of Crystal Lodge, I. O. O. F. A THREE ACT COMEDY

"The Village Schoolmarm"

Cast of Characters

Dick Elliott, storekeeper,	George Chick
James E. Graham, commercial traveller,	Ralph Kennett
Rev. Mr. Fleck, the village parson,	Fred Tyler
Hosea Clegg, who belongs to the G. A. R.,	Ernest Harriman
Sam Alcoh, who has more than better half,	Arthur Tyler
Tad, just a boy,	Frank St. Pierre
Sylvia Lenox, the village schoolmarm,	Leona Harriman
Ida May Alcoh, who has had advantages,	Eleanor Cunningham
Mrs. Alcoh, her proud mamma, sometimes forgetful,	Jennie Tyler
A. Elvira Pratt, a dressmaker,	Nellie St. Pierre
Posie, who was born tired,	Marjorie Chick

Coach, G. Garvin Gilmaine
Admission 25cts
Reserved Seats 35cts

front of the house toward the road, can now be seen in Mrs. Clayton's front yard.

The parsonage, I believe, looked the same as it does now. It was occupied by Rev. Lot Harmon, a great-uncle, I think, to Thirzie Colcord and others. To the west from the parsonage there was no building on the north side of the road until the little school house. The school house was a different color, red I think, and the windows were arranged differently. West from there the next buildings were the John Forrest place, just east of where Frank Jones now lives. I don't remember whether or not these buildings were occupied in those days or not; but John A. Forrest lived there later.

Mrs. Edith Chick's place was owned by Emery Whiting, and I think it has not changed in shape. The next place north was the Banfill place (now Grafton Ward), and I think the ell was connected with the barn by an old fashioned open shed. The present barn is, I believe, a new one built by George H. Conant. Except for the Whiting place, the Atkinson property and the parsonage, the Banfills owned all the land to the west as far as the school house, and I remember that part of it at least was used as a pasture. They owned land on the east side of the road, where Frank B. Nason now lives.

The church did not have a present built-on entrance. There were two doors on the front, one near the southeast corner and the other near the northeast corner, and an open platform extended across the

whole front. My recollection is that the choir was on a high place in the front of the church between the two entries.

The next place, now Bryants, was owned by the Leppers (Ruth Henry's grandfather). The house was burned sometime after the Leppers sold it and the part occupied by the Bryants is the old ell, or a part of it. There was a large two-story house with a piazza on two sides.

The next place north, now William Kennett's, was occupied by his father, and looked as it does now. To the north on the west side of the road the next place was at the top of the hill (now Mrs. Harding) and was occupied by Melville B. C. Chase, whose wife was my aunt. There was a big barn on the east side of the road, and also I believe, the hen house, which was later moved to the west side of the road and used as a blacksmith shop by Bob Webster and the Ferrens. This had better be checked on. The garage on the north end of the house was added by the Hardings. The Irving Ambrose place (now Albert Claytons) and Henry Harriman place (now Dwight Nickerson) and the building owned by Jessie Ambrose and Albert C. Berry's place were not then in existence. I am of the opinion that the rooster which is now on my barn was at one time on the hen house at the top of the hill.

Now starting south on the east side of the road we come to Mark Nickerson's place, which was not standing at the time of my first

recollection. Mrs. Jackson's place was occupied by Mrs. Ida Ambrose, and I seem to remember a very old lady, perhaps her mother's or her husband's. I don't remember whether or not the blacksmith shop was there then: perhaps someone can tell. The Kennett barn was the same as now. (To be continued in a future issue)

MUSEUM BUILDING ELECTRIC SYSTEM TO BE IMPROVED

Selectmen have approved an estimate of \$800 by MacDonald Electric to install a new panel box and reroute some of the wiring.

Thank you Isabelle Knowles and Roy Bubb for keeping the museum open every Tuesday afternoon. We had many visitors, some of whom joined the Society. The museum is closed now, but Ray Stineford will be happy to arrange a visit. 367-4687.

NOTE: The flag at the museum was flown at half mast until Sunday, September 23, when President Bush authorized all flags to be raised. On that day your society's president took down the flag for the winter.

This issue of the Madison Historical Society's Newsletter was typed by Peggy Hoyt and prepared for mailing by Olive and Roger Clayton. Copies were made by Mary Lucy. We mail to about 85 addresses, including area historical societies. The editor is Raymond Stineford.