

Madison Historical Society

Summer 2006

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Just a few quick notes. The museum clean-up day was held on Saturday morning, May 20, when Becky Knowles, Doug Haver, and I worked diligently for a few hours dusting, vacuuming, and even cleaning some of those large windows, to get the place in tip-top condition for the summer. Thank you.

The electrical needs of the Historical Society building have been worked on this spring. Becky is chairperson of the Building Committee. If you are interested in assisting, please call Becky at 367-9289.

Bob Nipher is heading up the Blueberry Fest event again this year... thank you Bob!

Roy Bubb and Roger Clayton have been keeping the museum open on Tuesdays from 2-4 this summer. Thank you, you guys are great!

At this time I want to acknowledge all the years Isabelle Knowles has dedicated to the Madison Historical Society. We miss you Isabelle, especially on those Tuesdays with Roy and Roger at the museum. Isabelle has been a wonderful docent, and has volunteered at many if not most of our events throughout the years. On behalf of the Madison Historical Society, I want to extend our deepest gratitude and best wishes.

During our last program sponsored along with The Friends of Madison Library, *Styles Bridges - Yankee Senator*, the author and presenter of the program James J. Kiepper presented the Society with an original political poster of Styles Bridges along with an original pin from when Bridges ran for President of the United States.

We framed the poster to hang at the museum with the pin attached and sent Mr. Kiepper a thank you note for his donation.

We are so pleased to announce that the Corner School House was recently placed on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. A new plaque will be on the building shortly. It states:

**MADISON CORNER SCHOOL
BUILT IN 1835
HAS BEEN LISTED TO THE
NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE
REGISTER OF HISTORIC
PLACES
MAY 1, 2006**

Enjoy the rest of the summer
and keep cool!

Mary K.W. Lucy

WISH LIST

1. Executive Board Secretary
2. Program Coordinator
3. Vice President
4. Lap Top Computer
5. Donations toward new exhibit displays.
6. Donations of rough sawn timber for the Pound or funds toward the efforts.
7. Donations towards expanding our Tool Shed for more exhibit space.

Executive Board 2005

Mary K.W. Lucy, President
Becky Knowles, Treasurer and
Curator
Lisa Hayford, Publicity
Olive Clayton, Mailings

CORRECTION

OOPS! The **October** program will be held on **Thursday, October 19**, not the 20th as stated in the 2006 brochure.

A NOTE FROM A MEMBER

I was thrilled with your research on Sally Perrow's house, which my mother, Ruth Henry of Madison, told me long ago had once belonged to her great, great grandparents, David and Sarah Barnard, originally from Boston. Their daughter, Sarah French Barnard married Adam Lepper, originally from Glasgow, Scotland. It was Adam Lepper who sold the Perrow house in 1874, according to your deed search, to Franklin Barrett. The house, reportedly, had the first central heating system in the town. According to my mother, Adam Lepper then moved next door to the house which lies between the now Perrow property and the Madison Church. My mother was born in Boston on Jan. 18, 1898, but spent her childhood until the age of six chiefly in Madison. She once told the Madison Historical Society's former president Ray Stineford that a children's classroom, perhaps private, was held on the second floor of the Perrow House. My own check of the U.S. Census records shows Adam Lepper living in Madison at least from 1880 to 1900, when he moved to parts by me unknown. My mother recalled with delight winter travel before automobiles by sled drawn by her parents' horse, Dolly. There were also stories that her uncle, Dave Lepper, objected so strongly to the tolling of the bell at the Madison Church that he secretly climbed the bell tower and stuffed blankets

around the bell clapper to gain silence. Ruth Henry and her son, my brother Dave (named for the naughty uncle) came to Madison in 1956 after the death of my father, John Jay Henry, and bought the William Manley house where my husband, Sepp, and I now reside. Submitted by Mary Henry Meier.

Editor's note: We welcome all stories and memories, long or short to add to the newsletter. Please e-mail to Mary Lucy at: ghostduster@adelphia.net or by mail to: Mary Lucy, 534 Moores Pond Rd., Silver Lake, NH 03875.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This is taken from an old newspaper article, probably from The Reporter, sometime after the Madison Historical Society meeting dated August 10, 1960.

Madison Historical Society

Our special Old Home Week Meeting was held at the Society hall at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 10th. There were 38 members and 20 visitors in attendance. The meeting was started with a pledge to the flag, and a greeting to visitors by our new President, Ralph Acker. Regular business was omitted. President Acker gave our sincere appreciation to Ernest Meader, J. Harold Colcord and Fred Bickford for the beautiful paint and decorating work they have done, and to Mrs. Alice Ward for her work in arranging and cataloging our displays. Thanks to all others who have helped, and to the Silver Lake Association for the gift of the money necessary for paint and materials.

The President gave a brief history of Madison, and a few of the facts were that Madison, originally a part of Eaton, was incorporated on December 17, 1852. We were originally part of

Strafford County, later Carroll. Our present road to Conway has been in use about 180 years, and previous to that was an Indian trail. There has been little change in its location.

First speaker was George Shaw, Jr., who gave a very interesting talk on old schools. Brief facts were that our first school was in 1853 with 268 students in elementary, and 8 years later had 301 students. As a comparison, in 1860 the town raised \$265.00 plus \$78.00 Railroad tax for support of our schools. In 1960, for only 63 Elementary pupils, plus perhaps half that number in high school, we raised around \$34000.00. Teachers salaries in 1860 were \$19.33 per month for males and \$12.42 for female teachers. We had our first High School classes in a private home in 1919, built Madison High in 1922, graduated the first class of three in 1923. The High School was closed in 1949, following the trend toward large consolidated school plants.

Second speaker was Mrs. Manora Clayton, one of our most excellent former teachers, who graduated from Nute High School, thence Salem Teachers College, and started teaching 47 years ago. She related how she arrived in Madison and very interesting details about the town in those days. Population was, at one time, about 800. There were 9 schools in town then, and Mrs. Clayton's class was around 34 pupils covering all eight grades. Her salary was \$10.00 per week, and she paid \$3.00 board and room at Doctor Martin's home. She mentioned that her pay, in those days, was not spent before she received it. She also mentioned that there was little disciplinary problem then, due to parent's influence and interest in schools.

Third speaker was our former President, and cemetery expert Herb Weston, who quoted some humorous inscriptions on

tombstones he had run across, and then gave a talk on Madison's cemeteries. There are 26 known sites which Herb can locate. He gave a very interesting talk on the Colby lot, in which there are only three stones, but over 20 graves. Herb is one of those rare people who can project themselves back over the years and recapture much of the past, and make it interesting to others.

President Acker read excerpts from school reports 100 years old showing teachers salary at \$3.00 per month, and a teachers own statement that the only text, or reference book of any kind in her school was Webster's Dictionary.

Fourth speaker was Lucinda Gilman who displayed some very old papers, one of which was a death notice for David Gilman who fell to his death from a barn roof, some 18 feet. This was dated 1833. "Lu" gave us some other very interesting information.

Fifth speaker was Mrs. Frank Jackson, wife of our former Supt. Of Schools. She told how the school districts were originally set up, and later changed to the present Union Districts. Mr. Jackson traveled for many years in Model T Ford cars when weather permitted. In winter he used horse and sleigh, and many times walked. It was not unusual for him to walk to visit schools from Madison, to West Ossipee, thence Tamworth to Sandwich where he stayed over night. Her talk mentioned many of the hardships in those days, and the dedication Mr. Jackson had to his profession, which many of us remember well.

Sixth speaker was Mrs. Alice Ward. She spoke of "Old Friends on Colby Hill", one of which was a woman we shall not name here, but was an Old Town Indian. She was an interesting person and somewhat of a character. Among her interesting traits, she was the first to discover automatic clothes washing. She simply spread them on a stone wall when it rained.

Her husband was a shoemaker and "Dentist". He performed his dentistry out of doors with a single pair of forceps and numerous pliers. The wife was also a basket weaver and fortune teller. In the summer, people used to come from the Hotels and Inns to have their fortunes told. The talk was also interesting, as Alice is another who can recapture the past and make it real.

Seventh speaker was Miss Ruth Kennett of Conway. Among the many interesting facts in her talk was the fact that before a town was built in this area, plans were made for a Church first. One of the first Churches was the original Eaton Church which we know now as the White Meeting House. It was started with about 65 members in 1844. In those days, people drew lots for choice pews. Members actually bought pews and received deeds to them exactly as we buy real estate today. The average cost of the pews in this Church ran from \$16.83 to \$20.00 for life. The average down payment ranged from 17¢ to \$2.00. This Church was, at that time, Free Will Baptist. The big Church day then, rather than Easter, was the first Sunday in May, when everyone turned out with their best finery and teams. Road races were often conducted after the services to show off the best teams.

Eighth speaker was Mildred Ward, who gave extremely interesting facts on our Lead Mine. Very briefly, about 8 different companies have operated it since it was opened in 1826. Pitch-blend, which is uranium, was even recovered from a small vein which petered out after about ten feet. Mildred estimates that the mine, with it's almost primitive methods of operation, yielded about 50 tons of lead, 500 tons of zinc, and enough silver to pay most of the shipping costs. We may still be sitting on top of potential atomic energy here in Madison, who knows?

Ninth speaker was Mre. Frances Knowles Minasian, granddaughter of David Knowles who built and operated the half way house on Chocorua Mountain in 1884. She displayed pictures and gave the following fact of interest to us all:

David Knowles purchased the land on the mountain from Jim Libby, later known as Jim Liberty, for whom the present shelter and trail are named. His first house blew down in 1914. Another was built which stood only one year. Mr. Knowles was 75 years of age the last time he climbed the mountain. The most interesting facts were that he strung a telephone wire to his home in Silver Lake. His groceries and supplies were obtained by phoning from the mountaintop to his home in Silver Lake. The groceries were obtained there. In the meantime, his horse named "Gypsy" was sent, alone, to Silver Lake for supplies. His saddlebags or packs were filled, and the remarkable horse conveyed the load back to the top of the mountain.

Our last speaker was Guy Nickerson, who could tell us more history than anyone living, but chose to stick with his hilarious stories, as only he can tell them.

Some of our older citizens were then introduced. This was followed by group singing, which brought the meeting to a close.

Old fashion refreshments were then served in the kitchen by our excellent refreshment committee. The drink served was old fashioned switchel which used to be used in the hay fields.

After visiting our newly started displays, the gathering broke up around 10:30 p.m.

Madison Historical Society **2006 Meeting Programs**

Meetings held at the Madison Historical Society Building at 7:00 PM unless noted. Read the "Conway Daily Sun" for notices and any changes for each month's program.

August 17 June I. (Granville) Dakin & Norma Granville

"Farmers Take Flight"

Program and book signing.

Madison Elementary School – Noyes Hall

September 21 Earl Whitaker
"History of the Robert Drew House"
Madison Historical Society

October 19 "Sebago Lake"
(A fishing story.)

Radio program written by William Manley, dated April 20, 1935.

Madison Corner Schoolhouse

Other events to note:

August 6 6 – 7 PM Blueberry Fest

August 8 Old Home Week – Tues.
2-4 Museum Open House

EXCERPT FROM THE **REPORTER Aug. 30, 1909** **Silver Lake.**

Old Home Week is a thing of the past now and the town is settling down into its usual quiet...

There was a motor boat race, first prize won by Earl Knowles with I. A. Forrest's new steel boat; boys rowing race won by boys camping on the lake; girls rowing race won by Miss Allen at the Lakeside House; canoe race won by Miss Marjorie Southers and friend; swimming race won by a young man camping on the lake; tilting contest with canoes unknown to the writer.

The water carnival in the evening was omitted with the exception of fireworks which were very quietly disposed of and witnessed by very few...

Madison Historical Society Contribution for Exhibit Display Cases

\$50 ____ \$100 ____ \$500 ____ \$1000 ____ \$2500 ____

Note that with a \$2500 contribution the Society will place a nameplate on a display case in your honor.

Please send contributions to:
Madison Historical Society
Attention: Treasurer
P.O. Box 505
Madison, NH 03849

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

NEWS FLASH

The Madison Historical Society Newsletters are now on our web page:
<http://ci.madison.nh.us/historical/index.html>

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