

Madison Historical Society

Winter 2007

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As I write this newsletter we are having a balmy winter... in the 50's today! However, the weather may feel more like winter when you receive this in February. As we all know, New Hampshire weather can change at any moment.

While we are on the subject of weather... we have some very fascinating programs for this summer season. Marty Engstrom will be presenting his program in August, "Marty on the Mountain." I loved watching Marty on top of Mount Washington with his weather report and his great smile. Our May program will feature Henry Forrest with a program on the Forrest Family here in Madison. In June, Carol Foord will be playing the part of Molly Ockett, Last of the Pequawkets. Maryjane Pettengill will be here in July portraying her Great-Great-Grandmother, Augusta (Porter) Pettengill who was the wife of Hollis of the 8th Vermont, Company B. Maryjane dresses in authentic, period Civil War attire and gives a dramatic portrayal in the persona of Augusta during her husband's absence during the war. She weaves authentic music into her program playing various songs on her vintage 1860's Eb cornet. In September, our own Michael Hathaway will present his program on the history of the Fryeburg Fair, which will all make us anxious to go to the Fair! So save your Madison Historical Society program brochure included with this mailing and jot those dates on your calendar.

Wonderful news! We now have a Vice President! This fall, Linda Drew Newton Smith has graciously stepped up to our Executive Board. You may already know Linda as Lee Drew's daughter. Linda has quite a background, which includes working as the Assistant Curator of the Susquehanna County Historical Society in Montrose, PA for seven years prior to moving back to her

family home, *The Silver Lake House*, in 2002. What a wonderful addition Linda is to our busy Board.

The Board has been actively working all fall and winter on some possible grants and fundraising ideas to help build up the funds we need to make repairs to our Society Museum building. We have been working on a ten-year plan in hopes to eventually make the building accessible year round. First, we need to replace our foundation and paint the exterior, including the roof. This past year the electrical lines were all updated, however, we still need to do some more electrical work. Our ten-year plan includes adding insulation and heat which will help preserve our Museum's collection of artifacts, revamping the old back storage room into a research room, renovating the attic space into a room for storage, and of course, adding bathroom facilities. We are thinking big!

That reminds me... the Museum Spring clean up day is slated for Saturday May 5, nine - noontime. If you can, please come out to help.

Enjoy the rest of the winter and Happy Valentine's Day!

Mary K.W. Lucy

WISH LIST

1. Lap Top Computer.
2. Donations toward new exhibit displays.
3. Donations of rough sawn timber for the Pound or funds toward the efforts.
4. Donations towards expanding our Tool Shed for more exhibit space.

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.

Executive Board

Mary K.W. Lucy, President
Linda Drew Newton Smith, Vice President
Robin M. Tagliaferri Ferreira, Secretary
Becky Knowles, Treasurer and Curator

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This is taken from an old newspaper article, probably from The Reporter, sometime after the Madison Historical Society meeting dated February 15, 1961.

Madison Historical Society

On Wednesday February 15, the Society held it's regular monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Historical Building. There were 33 present including one visitor from Eaton. The meeting was opened with a salute to the flag and singing of "America the Beautiful". Records of the previous joint meeting with Conway were read and the Treasurer's report was heard. Under new business, our President mentioned the need of money raising projects. Several methods were discussed. It was mentioned that herb Weston is, at present, compiling a history of roads and industries in town. The hearing which was held in Concord in regard to the Boulder road crossing was discussed by Pres. Acker. The matter of joint meetings with other Societies was discussed, in relation to their value to us. The majority feel that these meetings are beneficial to all concerned. Mrs. Marion Acker displayed a valentine, which is around 100 years old. It was a heart shaped stone, fashioned from what appeared to be either marble or some form of soapstone, with the

lettering on the face cemented under a glass bubble, complete with a round wooden container. Mrs. Acker gave a short talk on early valentines, giving emphasis to the brief reserved wording of that period. The ancient burial garments, which were given by Mrs. Victor Merriam, were displayed. Several very old pictures were circulated to see if those present could identify any of the people in the pictures.

Program Director George Shaw then presented the history of the Madison telephone system, assisted by Leon Gerry, Mrs. Frank Nason, Mildred Frost and several others, including Guy Nickerson who helped set most of the original poles.

Briefly, the company was incorporated in 1905 with \$1000.00 capital and three instruments, which were connected with New England Telephone. New England Telephone at this time had only two pay stations in town, and these were at the stores. The operation of switchboards was, for the most part, in the Nason family in its early years, and with Mrs. Olive Martin from 1926 to 1956, when dial phones took over. Records of the old company were read, and proved very interesting. The phone bill in those days averaged \$1.45 per month, and the cost of each pole all set was 25 cents. Lee Drew noted that one subscriber had paid his bill in blueberries for one month. Previous to the Madison phone company, other than the two New England phones, there were two other phone lines in town. One was the David Knowles line from Silver Lake to the Half Way House on Chocoura Mountain, and the other a special line which was installed in 1899 from Madison Railroad Station to Tamworth residence of President Cleveland.

We appreciate the efforts of all concerned in making the research necessary to make our meetings so interesting. The Society wishes to stress the fact that we welcome all visitors, and all prospective new members. You will certainly enjoy attending, as our monthly reports cannot possibly give more than a brief resume of our programs.

Our refreshments, which were excellent, were served at this meeting by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hamilton, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Chick.

A NEW ADDITION

The poem below came from a book of poems in which Penny Hathaway copied and gave to me to share in our newsletter. The book is entitled, *Whitton's Well*, forty-three poems by Albert L. Watson, Copyright 1976 by A. L. Watson, printed by asc Creative Printing, inc., Hagerstown, Maryland. On the inside cover page it is inscribed, *For Leon Gerry of Madison Corner if he will put up with it.*

#21 THE BOULDER

Walter Budroe, a local man I know,
chatted where he sat on a maple stump
cooling after splitting stovewood.
He stood and asked me to look with him.

"You know these woods. See on the
hillside where it's steeper near the top.
The trees are shorter there. Logging with
my horses in the spring I found a
boulder. You can just
see the top of it from here, grey.
It sits on the forest floor so squat
you scarcely notice how it tapers up
through boughs and makes a peak above
the trees.

I don't do much climbing. But I was
curious.
I laid out my saw and ax where I could
find them and scrambled up the backbone
to the top.
I said there's a peak on top, but where it
should make a peak there's more a
saddle just broad enough to sit with a leg
on either side.
The stone was cold but in the sun not so
cold as by the ground, another case of it
being warmer up above oftentimes than
down below. I meant to mention that to
Reverend Seasholes when I saw him
but when he changes churches I stayed
where I was.

I sat astraddle. You can see a long way
from there.
You see where the mountain, Burleigh,
bends the river to the west, towards
Bristol.

Mainly you see this village, the houses
just the way they are, but in a pattern
you don't appreciate below.

Everyone moves slower, even people
always in their hurry that have something
going as if they think the snow'll clear
that much faster.

Snow goes out and it comes back two
three times in April, but folks don't
remember year to year ----

or perhaps mix up what they want for
what they'll get.

Then the slow folks hardly move at all,
more permanent like trees or houses.
Neighbors never look unfriendly from up
away - you can't hear what they're
saying and you can't always figure what
they're doing except from what they
generally do you know about.

At first this village looks smaller. Then
you look a while closely at some barn or
henhouse then look away in a sweep and
it looks bigger, from the river up the
orchard on Pinnacle Hill. You see two
steeples on either end of town, one
church for preaching and one for singing
- you take your choice.

Our preacher did. Or you can keep away
from both.

Mostly young folks do that. But all but
some of them are gone to Durham to
college or Hanover or to the mills at
Manchester. The village has changed
since Bernice and I were young. It's
changing now.

You wouldn't know. Nothing's just the
same.

One change is taxes. Once land was land.
When you set up to farm, the least you
paid was money. If you'd deducted for
every pasture stone you'd have been paid
something to buy the land.

Only houses cost something, and walls,
because walls meant the stones were paid
for. That's changed.

The village is now taxed by the lot and
the structure.

The chief select-man comes by April or
May when the softer driveways are firm.

Anything you've done to make life easy is
charged. You lay pipes and bring water
into the kitchen from the well. That's tax.
Or change over your back pantry to a
bathroom and that's tax. You lay out
money all around, and that's tax too.
Then you've got to spend more to pay the
privilege of having spent.

If they want a little war, you pay more tax
so you can be paid if you have to go fight.

The women like it, the spending, shows they're as good as other folks. No woman washes clothes in the river or Dickerson Pond any more. It may be against the law.

A man and wife used to be who they were and what they did. Now it's what they can spend.

The trees have money value, and cleared land too.

River and pond land are big money: no one would build there when my father built. It was low land and not safe for grazing. Now it's money.

And you talk about tax. Just buy land on water!

From up where I sat it was hard to see dollars hanging on anything in this village.

I say I was above the village and could see patterns but not so high above but what the trees sloped right up to where I was. With all the money they're talking, you could see the village was still land and people mostly, was and is.

We have to hold out for people and for land. When you forget them and go on to something, well...

You wouldn't think I'd sit that long on a boulder. Most I've said I thought of later. I had my look around, then my thought was how to get on down. It was harder to get down than up. You have to have good boots.

I almost slipped. It gets much broader towards the ground or I would have slipped.

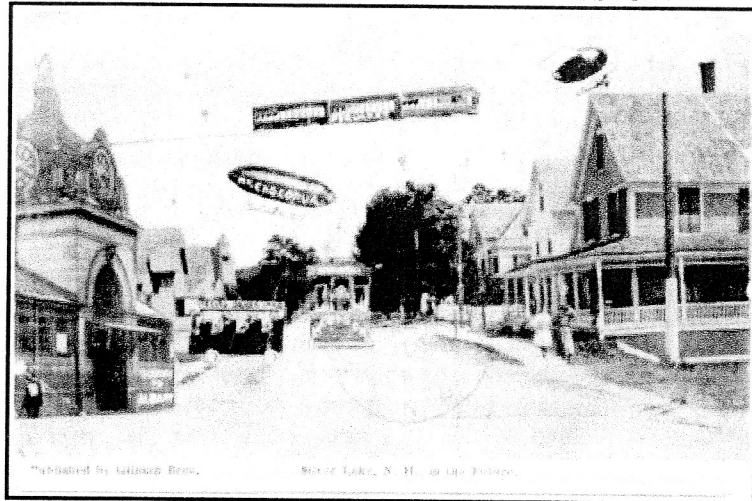
The glacier had some work to get that fellow there."

There was a call from the porch to come to other chores.

"I'll not get all this wood split this forenoon. You can find that boulder if you take the old road that used to go to Ashland. Go into the woods at the Moulton Place. Course you an see it from here."

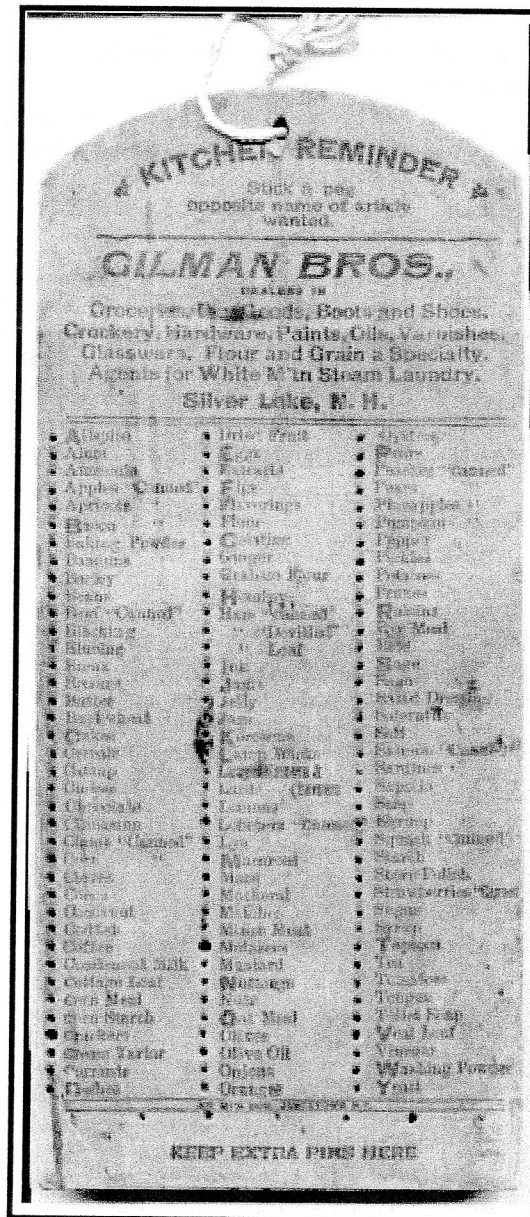
Editor's note: Where is this boulder? Your guesses will be in our Spring Newsletter. I believe the author was writing of another boulder and not the one here in Madison. Most of the author's poems take place in Tamworth, though his thoughts are relevant to many small towns here in New Hampshire. Look out for more of Albert L. Watson's poems about Madison in future newsletters.

DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM



Ruth Shackford recently donated these two items to the museum. The postcard was sent to Pauline Hurd from her future husband, Jesse

Shackford, Sr. (Ruth's father-in-law) in 1910, the year they were married. It reads *Silver Lake, N. H., in the Future*. On the aerial tram it reads "Pequaket", and the balloon "Mt. Chocorua". There is a sight seeing tour bus on the left which reads "Seeing Silver Lake", and the building there says, "Subway to Albany"... what a hoot!



The Gilman store wooden grocery list measures 10 1/2 inches by 4 3/4 inches. This belonged to Ruth's mother, Gladys Prescott. It once had wooden pins or pegs to place into the holes of the items she needed. Some interesting items of yesteryear are listed, including "Sapolio", which was hand soap. Notice how worn the "Molasses" and "Crackers" holes are.

GIFTS

Donations by check or cash - the most direct and immediate way to offer support. Your gift will be deeply appreciated, whether in response to our mailed appeal or at a time convenient to you. As a non-profit organization, all gifts we receive are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Memorial gifts- one of the most meaningful ways to acknowledge the passing of a loved one is by offering a gift as a tribute to a life lived. Memorial gifts become part of our Memorial Fund, which supports the work of the Madison Historical Society. Many times, families include a request for memorial gifts as part of the newspaper obituary. Often, individuals choose to make gifts in memory of their loved ones on birthdays or to mark the anniversary of their passing. A listing of the donors' names and addresses (but not the gift amount) is provided to the deceased's next of kin. Families tell us memorial gift tributes help to bring comfort and solace during their time of bereavement.

*You too can be a member of the
Madison Historical Society.*

Send
\$5.00 individual or
\$10.00 for family yearly membership
*along with your name, address, and phone
number to:*

Madison Historical Society
Attention: Treasurer
P.O. Box 505
Madison, NH 03849

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

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