

Madison Historical Society

Spring 2007

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring is here, but it surely doesn't seem it. What weather we have here in New Hampshire! April brought snow and a Nor'easter, which came with rain and winds. Hopefully, when you read this the weather has warmed up to bring our May flowers.

We have weathered another Town Meeting on March 17th presenting a warrant article which read:

Article 6. *To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of repairing and restoring the Historical Society Building.*

After much discussion the Article passed. On behalf of the Board I want to thank all the Townspeople who voted in favor of the future of the Madison Historical Society Museum.

Our wish list is getting smaller. Thanks go out to Noel and Linda Smith for their generous donation of timber for the Madison Town Pound restoration, and to Roger Clayton for the photos and measurement drawings needed for the project. Also, to Elwood Banfill of Bernard, Maine, who sent a generous donation toward the cause. Mr. Banfill's ancestor, Nathaniel Banfield, was elected Pound Keeper March 13, 1804. We are now in search of someone who would be willing to mill the lumber and place it to complete the Pound restoration.

The following ten year plan has been developed by the Board to help carry out the mission of

The Society in regards to our Museum building:

Year 1 (2008) Foundation,

parking, security

Year 2 Painting Exterior

Year 3 Ramp to main room and kitchen, adding a door and widening another

Year 4 Insulation, windows and doors

Year 5 Improvements to the heating system

Year 6 Archival room, research room, stairs to second floor, attic floor for storage

Year 7 Painting Interior

Year 8 Water system

Year 9 Bathroom

Year 10 Display cases, chairs and tables.

Welcome Spring!

Mary K.W. Lucy

WISH LIST

1. Lap Top Computer.
2. Donations toward new exhibit displays.
3. 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

Madison Historical Society

2007 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.

May 17 Program To Be Announced
Henry Forrest "Forrest Family History"
Rescheduled for 2008

June 21 Performance by Carol Foord
"Molly Ockett, Last of the Pequawkets"

July 19 Maryjane Pettengill
"The Girl I Left Behind Me: The Life of Augusta Pettengill During The Civil War."

August 16 Marty Engstrom
"Marty on the Mountain"
Program and book signing.
Madison Elementary School - Noyes Hall

September 20 Michael Hathaway
"History of the Fryeburg Fair"

Other events to note:

May 5 9 - 12 Museum Clean-up

August 5 6 - 7 PM Blueberry Fest

August 7 Old Home Week - Tues. 2-4
Museum Open House

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 17, 1960.

Madison Historical Society
Madison Historical Society had a clinic, guess that is what you call it, when you discuss a disease, at the Society's rooms in Madison.

It seems that when one gets involved in a historical society it is like a disease that has no cure except more and more research, study and discussion of history, mostly local in our case.

Our president, Herb Weston, opens our meetings promptly at 7:30 p. m. and the usual formalities were observed as to reports and business items. Then George Shaw gave a very good talk on the schools of Madison.

In 1853 there were 10 school districts with about 268 pupils attending and 63 children of school age not attending. The amount appropriated by the town being about a dollar a pupil and teacher salaries about twelve dollars a month, including board, for women and slightly more for men.

As in many N.H. towns, as stated by the State Reports, some of the buildings were the most disreputable looking structures imaginable. The report goes on to say that the buildings that farmers kept their sheep and pigs in were more weather tight and neat than the schools.

As we all know school often kept for one six week term in some of the districts. Classes were sometimes held in a room in someone's house, the teacher being a parent of one of the pupils.

Some of the places where there were school buildings are Horse Leg Hill on East Madison – Eaton line, the Emerson section, the North section, Barneby Hollow area, the Boston & Maine Quarry, the Lead Mine area as well as some of the better known places as Mason, Nickerson, Madison and High Street. Now if any of you old timers want to dispute this or tell us more about these schools come to our meeting on March 16th at 7:30.

We were fortunate in finding many school registers that teachers were required to keep then as well as in the present day. The earliest is dated 1859. The fine penmanship of the teachers, the list of equipment and remarks made by the teachers were most interesting. One question asked in the School Register was, Did the room have a clock or thermometer?

Regardless of the schools and conditions New Hampshire has sent out many learned men, who have held places of high position and made great contributions to our nation.

Our next meeting is to be held at our Society Building on March 16th at 7:30 P. M. Anyone interested is cordially invited to attend. Just to stand around and hear informal discussion during refreshments is worth the effort to leave your warm fireside for the evening. Just a word of warning, remember there is a great danger of catching the disease.

POETRY CORNER

I received one response regarding last month's poem, *The Boulder*, from Roger Clayton, who brought me maps and his guess that the boulder in Watson's poem is either near Meredith Hill or Pinnacle Hill Road in North Hampton, NH. Possibly off the old road to Ashland, NH.

We are happy to present another poem which is one of many from the book of poems that 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.*

NOTE: As written by Albert L. Watson. Date unknown.

#41 GUS FICKETT

Augustus Fickett was the last man to live up the north division of this town, last before you others came later.

He moved in that farm belonged to the Perkins and before them the Bickfords. I don't guess anybody lived there before the Bickfords.

No one owned the land before them.

There's nothing there now but patches. You can see by them there was a meadow once. Once there was meadow and woods both, and not much woods except where the hill's partly ledge above the spring.

All the buildins is down now and gone from where they fell down. Few men livin now ever saw them.

You can tell where they were by the split stone. The cellar's still there but the road agent's dumped in it and hunters leave bottles. I'd guess the cellar's about level with the ground, or higher.

The well's the other side of the road. I remember as a boy the well sweep But with the sweep off it. You could still see black water when you looked down. You fancied there were drowned deer.

Some in town would fill those old wells before somebody unsuspecting falls in, But not up north division. They haven't got around to that yet.

Fickett moved up to Emerson farm after it was last to farm the Perkins place. Sam and his wife gave up and moved away and the farm stood idle with nobody likely ever to clear brush again and keep the walls up. We heard the farm was gone like the rest in that part of town.

When Fickett's wife and daughter went to live with her folks in Maine, Fickett left the village and moved what he had up the old road. He was the last smith in this area. After him we had to go to Tamworth.

His shop stood on the neck into the pond where John Chick's mill is now. That's our industry in Madison. You can tell when Gus left by when John Chick bought the land, or if he already owned it, more than likely, When he tore down the smithy and laid out his mill. Now he has eighteen buildins, his grandson does.

Few ever saw the Emerson place. But everybody knew of it. The Nickersons had married Perkins and they lived in the village. Some still called the farm the Perkins Place.

Augustus Fickett went up there alone. He'd come every week to the village to get his few needs. He was older then and his muscle spent.

I recollect Gus shoein in his shop always backed up in his work.

We had oxen and mules then. Horses came strong when I was older. The boys would go over nights and watch Gus work at the forge. When we was fishin you could see the glow before daybreak on the pond. Gus worked early and late when he was workin.

Continued on the next page ...

He was a dark man and had a nose mention was made of in town. It was twisted and cast a shadow from the forge when he worked at night and some thought that Gus was a strange man and did strange things.

When he moved to the farm no one much saw him. We saw him when he went to Atkinson's store over to Madison Corner. He'd fetch dry goods and some goods that weren't dry. He'd take rum up to the farm with him. They said he had his own jug.

How many years was he there? You'd have to ask someone else. Come to think of it, no one else might know that.

After one bad winter he wasn't seen again. Far as I know he's up there yet, except, except you haven't seen him. You haven't.

Looks like when the house rotted down Fickett rotted with it. Perhaps he went under it, under the timbers and the roof to the cellar. No one much went up that way. That road was closed winters and still is. No use gradin where no one lives, except now in summer. Now its your road.

Alphonse Brown knew of him and is still alive. He might tell you more. Phonse is ninety-six. What he told me once he was workin for Will Salter and he went once by down the wagon path Emerson had put to Tamworth. Salter sent him to get planed boards for a shed. The barn was down then when he went by and there was no door to the house. Wind went out the front and in the back. He could hear nothing but somethin slammin inside where he couldn't see. He didn't think to go in. Will Salter was always in a hurry about somethin he wanted and likely he was then. Massachusetts people is that way.

No one ever did make do in that ground. It was flood in the spring and dry in summer and fall. And stone. They had enough stone for walls but you can't make a farm go with walls. You know your walls.

The Perkins once had three farms goin in that land at once: John on your land and Waldo lower and Granville Perkins on the high slope. Turned out the high slope was the best. Granville was a farmer they say, but when he died his boys had all gone West and his daughters wouldn't marry farmers. By then the Masons and the Lawrences and the Jacksons and Whites had all given up. Those farms are long gone. Augustus lived in the last farm there was there. I don't say he farmed it. He went there to live alone. And he died alone. Maybe he left before he died. No man knows.

You asked about Gus Fickett.

OLD NEWS CLIPS

These news clips are from the front page of *The Laconia Evening Citizen*, dated Monday, March 30, 1953. Do you recognize these people?

Citizen By Water



Laconia Evening Citizen was delivered by boat in some spots Saturday. Robert and Richard Higgins, Madison newsboys, met Fred Long, district circulation manager, by boat when he drove his route from Chocoma to Madison.

Madison Digs Out



There was a job for everyone at Madison during flood time. Seven-year-old Norman Blake, left, pitches in with a shovel to help George Jones.

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>

**Madison Historical Society
P.O. Box 505
Madison, NH 03849**