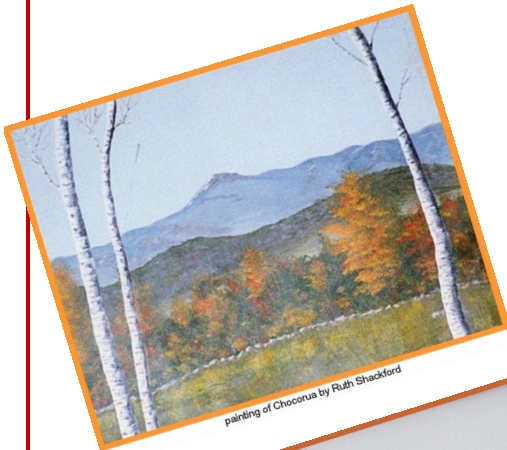


Madison Historical Society Winter 2025



It was our great pleasure last month to honor our oldest resident, RUTH SHACKFORD, 96, with the SILVER LAKE WOMEN'S CLUB CANE. Selectmen John Aruda, pictured here, presented her with a certificate, and Town Clerk Mike Brooks was on hand to offer more congratulations. Ruth has lived her whole life in Madison and raised five children. She helped her husband Jesse "Bud" Shackford run his excavation business and spent over 20 years working in the Silver Lake and Conway post offices. Locally she is well known for her accomplishments as a cook and baker, making many wedding cakes and decorated cakes for the Madison Church Annual Donation cake auction. She also enjoys painting, gardening, crocheting, reading, music, and entertaining family and friends.



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Jeannette Dube, the previous cane recipient, passed away in November at the age of 101.

Town Meeting is fast approaching, and now, as in the past, road maintenance is always an issue. Following are excerpts from a talk that Ernest Meader gave to the Madison Historical Society in 1967.

ABOUT ROADS

2025 POLLS OPEN TO VOTE MARCH 11. TOWN MEETING MARCH 15

The method of travel was much different in the 1850s than it is today. The horse and saddle were used, also the horse and wagon by those that were fortunate enough to have such conveniences, many families without horses. No doubt many of you have heard the expression **shanks mare**. This meant on foot.

With a little imagination you can picture children walking to school over these little back roads, some long distances. The most of these roads, I say "roads" (in some cases they were referred to as highways), were not much more than paths, very narrow, usually just a horse path and two wheel ruts with grass growing in between. In the winter these roads were plowed by chaining a log to one side or to the runner of an ox sled, drawn by four or six oxen. This method of plowing or breaking the road required a return trip back to the starting point as it plowed only one side of the road at a time.



Travel on these roads was very treacherous both summer and winter. The word **teams** means ox or horse drawn vehicles, such as wagons or sleds. Some wagons had four wheels where others only had two wheels. Two-wheel vehicles were called road carts or sulkies. The four-wheelers had many names: buggies, buckboards, carryalls, phaetons and Concord wagons. One other was called a Democrat.

When two of these so-called teams met travelling in opposite directions on these very narrow roads, it could be very difficult to pass each other without locking wheels. Sometimes if these citizens were not too friendly, there could be an argument. Many people have been hurt by being thrown out of their wagons, and some of the less considerate inhabitants have sued the Town for injuries sustained. At one period it was getting to be a racket. There was one case where a lady citizen wanted to get some easy money from the Town, so she told her husband that they should have an accident. Her husband said

that she would have to show evidence of bruises of some sort, so, it was said that this fine lady used a hammer to make black and blue spots. I am not saying this to be a fact, but I have heard this story several times. You can see warrant articles for damages in many of the old Town Reports.

As early as 1854 the Town was required to lay out new roads and discontinue others. For instance,

"By request of Abraham Harrison of the town of Madison in said County, we, Isaiah Forrest and James M Cook, Selectmen of said Town do lay out a road or highway commencing at or near John Crooker south line on the Annis Road so-called, near the Five Mile Pond, of the width of three rods, through the land of said Harriman, where it is now cut out and traveled, south until it comes into the old road about fifty or sixty rods, with a right to straighten it, when it comes into the old road at the south end. The Town pays no damages nor claims any for the old road."



1920 mud season: East Madison & Lead Mine Roads

On petition in 1859 a road was laid out northeasterly from Jeremiah Marston's to the Freedom road on Jordan Harmon hill 2 rods wide, subject to **gates and bars** and to be kept in repair by the petitioners, they to pay the damages awarded amounting to \$5.

After being maintained for 28 years in accordance with the original decision of the selectmen, this road was in 1887, upon petition, changed to an open road and damages of \$80 were recommended to be paid by the Town to Samuel Frost. (written by Leon Gerry)

In the 1888 Town Warrant there was a petition by Joseph Marston and others to take what action as may be necessary for the removal of **gates and bars** across the highway leading past the Marston dwelling.

Gates and bars are probably something that many of you cannot realize why and what for. In many cases these people of the early days owned large tracts of land, parts for growing



crops and the balance for grazing. There had to be a fence between to keep the livestock

where it belonged. In the case where the highway ran through the farm, the pasture might be on all sides of the cropland, so anyone traveling these roads were obliged to open these bars or gates and lead their horse through and then close them. As a rule, most everyone was cooperative about closing them, but if not, livestock were free to stray and get into a neighbor's crops and do damage. If this happened the Pound Keeper would be notified, and these animals would be put in the **Town Pound**. The owner would have to pay for the damage done plus the expense of the Pound Keeper.

March 6, 1792. Voted to build a pound at the fork of the road nigh Mr. Thomas Danforth. Voted to build said pound of white pine lumber with the bark peeled off with one gate hung on iron hinges. Voted sixteen days work to Henry Weed and Shaver Nickerson to build said pound by he last of June next. Voted Thomas Garland Pound Keeper, he paying five mugs of grog...attest Henry Weed, Town Clerk.

ABOUT WORK

Men as a rule walked to their work, some 5 or 6 miles, and chop wood or timber for 10 or 12 hours, or work on the roads or for a neighbor and then walk home. How much money did they get for such a day's work? I have taken figures from an old account book of John Kennett dated 1860 as follows: credit of 2 days' work 1.00; work one day cutting bushes .50; one day mowing

oats .50; one day self and oxen 1.00. Most everything was carried on accounts. One other thing they used to do was they called "changing work". One neighbor would help another, and then this neighbor would return the favor.

ABOUT TAXES

In 1862 it was voted that all taxes that are not paid within one year shall pay interest. Apparently previous to that time delinquency was not penalized. In that year ninepence per hour was allowed for man and oxen for work on the highway. In 1860 it had been voted on motion of James Mooney that the price for selectmen's services while doing business in town the ensuing year shall be one dollar per day and no charge to be made by them for board or office rent. It would be interesting to know what prompted that motion and vote. (written by Leon Gerry)

4

1885 Feb. 26	Paid Geo. M Atwood, for medical attendance upon, and medicine furnished for Geo. W. Frost, order 82	5 00
		\$33 00
PAID ORDERS FOR BOUNTIES ADVANCED.		
Order No. 17	Henry Harriman, cash adv. for bounties	9 70
" 45	" " " " "	8 40
" 78	Robert K Chick, " " "	2 00
" 41	Josiah H Hobbs, " " "	23 40
	Total	43 50
PAID ORDERS FOR REPAIRING HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES, EXCLUSIVE OF ARREARAGES.		
Order No. 20	Edwin Frost, labor in dis. 22.	1 25
" 21	Frank R Kennett, material and work dis. 2	8 53
" 34	Samuel M Harmon, work on railing bridge, dis. 2, and use of tools in dis. 10,	8 25
" 37	William Mason, labor self and cattle, in district No. 8	5 90
" 38	Samuel Allard, materials and expense of stone bridge in district No. 15.	12 00
" 39	Langdon M. Atkinson, materials furnished district No. 10.	2 40
" 48	Geo. A Nickerson, labor on branch bridge	1 25
" 50	Robert K Chick, labor on branch bridge and bridge at outlet of Silver Lake, and highway to West Ossipee	23 00
" 53	Holland C Harriman, for labor on bridge at outlet of Silver Lake.	1 25
" 57	George Chick, bridge plk & timber.	39 58
" 58	Henry Harriman, for labor on branch b'ge and on bridge at outlet of Silver Lake, and highway to Ossipee	11 70
" 77	Charles Kennett, extra labor on highway to Conway.	2 50
" 85	Henry Pasco, for breaking branch road.	10 00
" 87	Samuel Frost, for labor with oxen, repairing highway, in highway file. No. 3	4 11

1852 Annual Report COMMON SCHOOLS of N.H.

Sixth ANNUAL REPORT upon the COMMON SCHOOLS of New-Hampshire: the same being the Second ANNUAL REPORT of the BOARD OF EDUCATION, June 1852

While our laws are so full and interesting in relation to this important department of education, it is to be regretted that they have not bestowed on the physical training of the young that attention its importance demands. It is an object of the first magnitude for every one to possess not only a sound mind, but a sound mind in a sound body. ...It is the opinion of the most eminent medical men in the country, that the seeds of disease and premature old age are sown to a great extent in all our cold, cheerless and dilapidated school-houses. How can children with their plastic forms, sit six hours a day, in positions as void of comfort as those in the old-fashioned stocks, and breathe air full of stupefying gases, with impunity? Beauty, health and strength are sacrifice, without stint, in too many of our school-rooms.

1875 MADISON SCHOOL REGULATIONS by Nicholas Blaisdell, Superintendent

School rooms shall be kept warm and clean and teachers may require scholars to build fires and sweep the school room.

Scholars shall be in attendance at the commencement of the school in the morning and at noon and no scholar shall be excused from school without a reasonable excuse.

No scholar shall be guilty of any rude, indecent or disorderly conduct in coming to or returning from school or in or about the school house.

No scholar shall repeat any lewd, obscene or profane word in or about the school house or going to or returning from school, or write or mark in any manner any obscene or profane word or obscene or lascivious figure.

No scholar shall throw stones, snow balls or other missiles or play at ball or bring sleds or slide on the road or in the vicinity of the school house.

No scholar shall use in any manner undue or disrespectful conduct or language to their teacher or any other persons not members of the school.

1891 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

We very earnestly call your attention to the condition of our school buildings throughout the town. The school in district No. 1 (Corner) was put in fair condition during the past year, but is still very much in need of new windows and doors, and also painting on the outside. Those in districts Nos. 4 (Horse Leg Hill) and 6 (Mason) could be made respectable at a comparatively small expense, but those in districts No. 2 (Nickerson—pictured at right) and No. 5 (Silver Lake) are in shameful condition. They are incompatible with civilization, morality and health; they are **not even worthy of sheltering pole cats**. It is insulting to teachers to ask them to teach in them, and an uncivilized, inhuman, barbarous act for this town to allow its children to assemble in such contemptible, dirty, dingy old shells as these shanties are. It is an outrage to civilization.

We earnestly ask the people of this town to take some steps towards building and repairing school buildings, and in the name of Heaven don't delay, for we are far behind the times now. Gather all your pride, your humanity and morality, and for the interest of your own children, if nothing more, show your manhood at the next meeting, and try and do a little home missionary work, for **if there isn't something done, the heathens or cannibals will lead us**.

School Board of Madison:

Mrs. S. M. Harmon, Mrs. J. E. Harmon, W. G. Martin



If that strong criticism was meant to stir up people, it apparently succeeded. For on a petition signed by 12 men a meeting was called for April 12 to "raise such sum of money as may be necessary to build, remove, repair and insure school houses and outbuildings in said town". After the election of a moderator it was voted to dissolve the meeting. (written by Leon Gerry)

To see the a copy of the original 1891 report and all those from the first published report in 1885 to the present, go to:

https://scholars.unh.edu/madison_nh_reports/

MADISON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2024

(for publication in the Annual Town Report)

The Madison Historical Society is very grateful to Madison residents for their support. We are fortunate to have the use of the original Madison Town House for our museum building, which is owned by the Town of Madison. The Town keeps the lawn mowed, the driveway plowed, and pays for the electricity.

Our popular summer exhibit was a TIMELINE OF MADISON, which was also published in more detail as a book (available for purchase). We had three summer programs of outdoor music at the Lake using local talent. During Old Home Week we had a Blueberry Bake & Book Sale and a table at the Craft Fair, as well as a table at the Madison PTO Christmas Fair. We also updated our blueberry cookbook for sale.

We were pleased to be able to use space at the elementary school where students can learn about their town's history, and we also took some "show and tell" items to the Adult Day Care Center.

We received several important additions to our archives, including a large framed previously unknown photograph of Elizabeth Cummings, Nickerson photographs, and items from the Bickford family and the Granvilles.

This year we are planning renovations, both inside and out. A painting contractor is scheduled to start outside in the spring. We have received a small grant and donations which will help replace at least two of the old windows, but we put aside as much money as we can for the ongoing maintenance issues of an old building.

With renovations taking place, we may not have regular hours this summer, so we are considering three house tours, a scavenger hunt and monthly programs of community interest.

We encourage you to join us in supporting the Madison Corner School Preservation project. That little building which sits on the school property is the oldest public building in town and sadly is deteriorating. Our partnering with the MCSP committee enables them to accept donations and grants through our not-for-profit status.



We invite you to visit our Facebook page or website where you can find photos, slide shows, newsletter archives and other useful information.

As a partner of the Madison Corner School Preservation Committee, we are printing their Annual Report here. THEY ARE STILL LOOKING FOR A CONTRACTOR/BUILDER TO MANAGE THE EXTERIOR PROJECT. If you would like to make a donation, you may send contributions to us on the form on the back page of this newsletter.

Madison Corner School Preservation Committee Report

(for publication in the Annual Town Report)

The Madison Corner School Preservation Committee (MCSPC), a sub-committee for the Madison School Board is extremely grateful for the support we have received from the residents of Madison. It is clear residents value the historic significance of the 190 year old structure. This little (red) schoolhouse existed before Madison did. Built in 1835, moved twice, it is the oldest public building in town and is registered on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places. It served as a school for 114 years, then as town and school library for 49 years. Most recently it has been used for storing the school's theater program's props and costumes. The building is structurally sound and its interior in good shape. The exterior is deteriorating. An environmental study completed by *desmarais environmental* in 2023 determined lead hazards are present and will need to be abated from the building's exterior and possibly soil immediately surrounding the building. It was at this point, a committee was formed to explore options to preserve it and create an plan of action.



The Committee agrees the practical solution to abating the lead is replacing the siding on the north, south and west sides of the building. The east side, including two windows were replaced in 2003. One estimate has been received for materials only, to replace the siding including two rotted windows equaling \$24,000.

In 2024 the NH Preservation Alliance's *Seven to Save* program was applied for. Unfortunately there were seven projects deemed more needy than ours. However, the Community Preservation Services Manager generously offered an onsite visit and provided helpful suggestions and resources. The Committee plans to apply again in 2025. We are currently following multiple grant opportunities, some that require matching funds, which the residents of Madison have generously contributed.

The Madison Historical Society has graciously partnered with the MCSPC by means of opening a checking account under their not-for-profit status. This provides the Committee the opportunity to accept donations, engage in fund raising events and apply for grants.

A building without a purpose is just a building. The Committee is currently discussing and researching the possibilities of creating a community enrichment program based out of the Corner School to provide for all ages and many varied interests. We will seek the community's suggestions and desires in the near future.

The MCSPC is grateful for the community's interest and support in preserving our town's only one room schoolhouse. We welcome folks who have building, grant writing and fundraising skills or experience to join our committee. We also welcome all who have an interest to join us in this endeavor. It'll take a village. Please contact the School Administrator and she will put you in touch with us.

Respectfully submitted: Nancy L. Martin, Chairman

PARTS OF TOWN

Appellations are often applied to various areas of a town for diverse reasons. For instance:

SHAWTOWN refers to an indefinite area generally south and east of Stacy Mountain extending into Freedom and was taken from the name of Shaw who lived in the area.

GRAYTOWN for the same reason refers to a small area east and south of the home of Frank Ward.

PEARSON HEIGHTS refers to the elevation to the rear and east of the old Theodore Pearson place.

DRY BRIDGE was near the McPherson place over a spot where there was never any water.

BANIKEE HOLLOW became the slipshod way of saying Banfill Hollow and referred to that area where lived Banfills from the Boulder Road through Dry Bridge area.

SLIP BRIDGE referred to a bridge at the south of Silver Lake. Perhaps it occasionally slipped out with high water.

HORSE LEG HILL was that hill on the road from East Madison going towards the Sidehill School in Eaton. It is said a horse broke its leg on this hill.

KENJOCKETY, a word from the Bible meaning "above the multitude", was a building on Goe Hill occupied by a retired minister, Elder Clow, who believed that he was living on the highest point of land in Madison. (We have the Kenjockety sign at the MHS museum.)



My ancestors were early settlers on Goe Hill. Two cellar holes still remain. As a young kid I walked up (from the Lead Mine Road) with my grandfather and family and the Kenjockety building was still standing, what was left of it. A very old abandoned building mostly swallowed by the forest. The name was fun to say and sounded musical. What I remember clearly is how the stairs inside had been chewed by animals. When I hear or see the name Kenjockety, it brings me right to that special memory. Warmest regards, Nancy L. Martin

Note: At the museum we are constantly uncovering new tidbits of information. Many people were involved in research, and we are finding contributions from people like Leon Gerry, Ernest Meader, Roger Clayton and countless unidentified others.

Sometimes the information is contradictory!

For example:

“It has been written that the first permanent settlement in town was probably about 1780, when Samuel Banfill, the great grandfather of August Lary built a log house near the ‘Olde Burial Ground’ on land owned in 1905 by Lester R. Ambrose (1890 John Harriman). This Banfill also built the first framed house in town on or near this spot about 1785.”

“We cannot, however, favor the story of a log cabin. Early settlers in New England were unfamiliar with that type of dwelling. They had come here leaving behind them framed huts. Log cabins are more of a legend than an actuality. All indications point to a fact; that early settlers in our area put up a framed building, such as it was, and in most cases these were substantial buildings.”

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Madison Historical Society
PO Box 505
Madison, NH 03849

MEMBERSHIP FORM:

Annual Dues Payable July 1st

_____ **Single Membership - \$10.00** _____

_____ **Family Membership - \$15.00** _____

_____ **Donation, general** _____

_____ **Donation toward Madison Corner School preservation** _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

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