

Windham Historical Society Quarterly Review

Spring/Summer 2021

Hope Springs Eternal

By Haley Pal

With the pandemic in full swing for over a year, it seemed as though the Village Green would be stuck at a standstill forever. But just like the flowers come up every spring, we're beginning to see signs of life emerging once again as we resume activities on our little village.

With more and more people getting their vaccinations, we are able to gather once again and we hope to take advantage of the warm weather this summer and fall to continue making necessary improvements that will allow us to start opening the buildings to the public next year.



Top: The Windham Center Library is all spruced up for summer.



Left: The Old Grocery has a new home and a new porch with help from Dave Johnson.

Over the past few weeks, underground electrical work has been installed to provide lighting and electricity to the buildings that are now populating the Green. Contractor Dave Johnson has also been busy at work on the Old Grocery and the old structure now boasts a brand new front porch.

There have been two cleanup days thus far this spring and slowly, but surely, the Old Town House is being cleaned out and made ready for some of our current inventory to be moved there from the South Windham Library. We're hoping in doing so, we will be able to clean up the library building and start putting together the railroad and South Windham museums that will be housed there. It is our hope to open the museum sometime in 2022.

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We have also been doing some work on the grounds. The leaves have been raked and we are in the midst of cleaning out and replanting some of the gardens. This month, with the generous help of Risbara's Greenhouse in Portland, we will be filling containers with beautiful flowers to brighten up the Village Green and have it ready for an event we are planning for late July.

Thanks to a significant donation from Don and Jan Rich, we are also looking into doing some improvements to the Old Town House Museum that serves as our headquarters. A new septic system, bathroom repairs, insulation, and foundation work are all being considered. Estimates are being obtained and projects are being prioritized.

We're also hoping to do a bit of straightening to the blacksmith shop by cleaning up the interior to get it looking presentable inside. Once that is achieved, we can begin to work on a display of the many tools that have been donated and collected over the years. This display will help people better understand the art of blacksmithing and the role the smithy played in 19th century America.

These are all very aggressive plans and will require some much-needed volunteers to help get the work done. We could use assistance with painting, woodworking, gardening, organizing, and a number of other projects. If you have a useful skill and would like to join us in having fun with history, please call the Society at 892-1433. Monetary donations are also welcome.

*Come do your part
in bringing hope eternal
and history to life for
future generations
of Windham residents.*

*Become a part of the
Village Green dream team!*

WINDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of the Windham Historical Society is to foster interest in the history of the town by presenting relevant programs, providing educational opportunities, and maintaining historical facilities where displays of the town's past are available.

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Junior History Club Happenings

By Paula Sparks



As the school year comes to a close, so too does the Middle School History Club. This has been an unusual year for both the Club leaders and the Junior Historians themselves. Tuesday afternoons have been a bright spot in a dark year. The Junior History Club was one of the very few after-school programs taking place and

we all looked forward to it.

We socially distanced, sanitized, and wore our masks as we explored history through hands-on activities. The year started with journal-making and ended with barn board-birdhouse building. We also made pretzel log cabins and orange pomanders. We explored old Thanksgiving recipes and the history of writing letters to Santa. We also learned a bit about New Year, May Day, and Mother's day history.

Games are always a hit and club members enjoyed playing Presidential Trivia, Architecture Bingo, Windham Historic Sites Crossword Puzzles and Scrambled Words, and History of Photography Fill-in-the-Blanks.

The Junior Historians put their creativity to work by developing a club display based on things they have learned this year. They filled a school display case with a large Windham map labeled with descriptions of the historic sites we learned about. A collage of photos

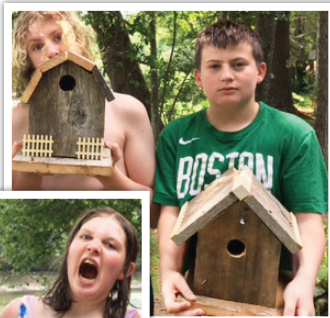


The Junior Historians in action.

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Building a birdhouse.



The finished products.



of the group and samples of our many projects completed the background. Some of those projects included making wood-burned maps of Windham, box cameras, sun prints, reverse paintings on glass, and stereoscopes. There was also a timeline of important events that have happened in Windham, the State of Maine, and the US from 1620 through the present day.

At snack time, we discussed the issues of the day and how they related to the past and to us. We also read from the book, *Joseph K. Manchester, Northern Son in the South 1861-1863*, written by Historical Society member Carol Manchester.

Though we haven't had a chance to talk about what we might like to explore next year, we all missed not being able to take any field trips this year. We hope that will change come September. I haven't asked what they liked best or least about the Club, but I have heard, "Will we still have history club in High School?" several times throughout the year. Thankfully, we still have one more year of Middle School to look forward to before we have to think about that!



Christmas Fair Returning in 2021!

We are so looking forward to getting back to our normal regular schedule of events this year! The Christmas Fair is one of our larger annual fundraisers and is always a festive and enjoyable time for Society members. This year, we are once again teaming up with Friends Church and can't wait to share our treasures with the greater Windham community!

Unless there are any unforeseen events, our two organizations are planning on having the Christmas Fair at the **Friends Church on Saturday, November 6.**

If you or anyone you know enjoys crafts, donations are gratefully appreciated! Our treasurer Linda Lunt will be organizing the fair again this year and you can contact her at 655-3421 for more information. Also, if you are interested in helping with the fair - setting up, cleaning up, or baking, please let Linda know!

If you'd like to 'rent' a table to sell your own unique homemade crafts, please contact Izzy Gilman at 892-8104. The more vendors we have, the merrier our Christmas Fair will be!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2021

Hello Members!

This summer is expected to be like no other! I always look forward to it as a birth of a new year, but after this past year, it will be greatly appreciated beyond imagination! What a wonderful feeling to be amongst family and friends again!

The Board has been busy since late February planning out good weather projects for the Society – so much to do and so much accomplished so far! We reviewed the list, project leads came forward, and work began!

The underground utilities have been completed. Thanks to Linda Lunt's direction, Wyman Electric ran conduit and added lighting to four of the Village Green buildings and Buxton and Son Plumbing has installed seasonal water lines around the Village Green! Lloyd (Buster) Gilman and Jim Elder graded around the Old Grocery and hauled away the excess dirt. Dave Johnson and his crew returned to finalize the setup of the Old Grocery – installed new deck, porch posts were put back in place, and a ramp for handicap accessibility was added. Sam Simonson assisted the contractors with several of the projects and did maintenance work on the buildings as well. Plans are in place to finish work in the One-Room Schoolhouse, South Windham Library, and the Blacksmith Shop – we are well on our way!

There is money set aside to make improvements to the almost 190 year-old brick museum building. Contractor Dave Johnson inspected the building for us – noting it was built to last! Leveling the floor is our top priority and if funds remain available, energy-efficient projects will follow.

As you can see, your Historical Society is keeping very active! Help is always needed, however. So, if you, or perhaps someone you know, would like to lend a hand, please contact me at 671-8428 or leave a message at the Historical Society (892-1433).

We are excited to announce the reopening of the Society building on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon. And as part of the Windham Historical Society "family," we hope you will stop by to see what's going on or attend an event later this year!

I wish all of you a most wonderful and enjoyable summer with friends and family!

Susan Simonson,
President, Windham Historical Society

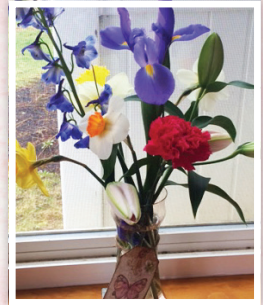
May Day Bouquets

By Haley Pal

May Day was a popular holiday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. People would leave baskets of flowers and treats on doorsteps as a sign of affection and appreciation. This year, the Windham Historical Society decided to resurrect the old tradition and spent April 30 and May 1 delivering surprises to Society members and friends.



Some people were treated to a bouquet of beautiful blossoms arranged by Haley Pal and provided with monetary help from Society members and from Rhonda Davis at the Windham Flower Shop. The wonderful variety of vases used were also donated by Society members including Diane Lavigne, Kyle Allen, Haley Pal, and Linda Lunt. Their diversity made each arrangements uniquely lovely.



All of the posies came with a homemade tag provided by Society member Paula Sparks that explained the bouquets' meanings in the Victorian Language of Flowers. Some expressed hope, cheer and goodwill. Others expressed gratitude and affection. They were all well received by their recipients and we have gotten some wonderful thank you notes for our efforts.



Our friends at Town Hall, the Windham Public Library and some of our members received a different type of "bouquet." Susan Simonson put together adorable lollipop baskets that made delightful treats for those who received them. Public Works, being such a large town department, received breathtakingly beautiful

cupcake bouquets created by Samantha Clark of Kneading Sweets in Windham. All of these also came along with a pretty tag carefully crafted by Paula Sparks.

It was our hope that this small May Day gesture would come as a sign of optimism after a rather dark period of time. We hope they served as a little ray of light leading to the end of a long tunnel.

CONDOLENCES

By Carol Manchester

Windham Historical Society marks with sadness the passing of two longtime Windham residents who as members of the Windham Historical Society have also generously supported our organization over the years. To the family and friends of Dick Clark and Bill Crane, Windham Historical Society extends its sincere sympathy.

Dick Clark, 86, passed away on December 28, 2020. He perhaps is best known for his lifelong career in the insurance industry, a career which began soon after graduation from the University of Maine Orono with a degree in business administration. Starting out as a trainee, Dick Clark became district manager, partner, and later, president of an independent insurance agency, which eventually became the well-known Clark Insurance. Always generous, he reorganized the agency as an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) in the early 2000s to give every employee personal investment in the agency's success and a retirement opportunity. The town of Windham benefitted greatly following his 2003 retirement, for he served on several committees, saw the need for and initiated several community projects like Windham Old Home Days, a polio clinic, and street signs. He served as a trustee for three organizations and was a frequent and generous donor to Windham Historical Society as well.

On March 24, 2021, **Bill (William P.) Crane**, 90, passed away. For 34 years, his working career was given to GTE Sylvania, retiring in 1986 as the Standish division purchasing manager. Believing that service to others helped to make the community a better place, Bill worked on the construction of the new North Windham Union Church sanctuary, shingling the roof of the Old Grocery, and replacing the beams underneath it when the Windham Historical Society first acquired the building.

He was a founding member of the town's volunteer rescue unit and helped to raise funds for its new public library. He served a term on the Windham Town Council, was involved in the building committee for the public works facility, and held a lifetime membership in Lions Clubs International. Bill also held memberships in several fraternal organizations. One member remarked, "I remember him as a gentleman," and Bruce Small noted in the NWUC newsletter that "They [Bill and wife Ruth] were very generous donors to the library, scholarships, and many other organizations. Those who knew him were better for it."

Creative Learning By Paula Sparks

COVID has been a struggle for most schools and deciding how to operate during the pandemic has been difficult for the educators at the Windham Historical Society as well.



The closing of schools a year ago in March resulted in the shutdown of all the Society's spring school programs. That meant no bus tours or one-room schoolhouse visits and sadly, the strict restrictions carried into the fall.

This spring as things started showing signs of improvement, the School Committee began getting requests for some type of school programming. With work being done on the Village Green, an alternative location had to be found, but with a little imagination, two third grade classes were able to have a modified one-room schoolhouse experience.

They were taken on a trip back in time in one of the outdoor classrooms on the high school grounds. Though the weather

was a bit brisk, it was sunny and the kids were willing. With a little tweeking to the process, schoolmarm Mrs. Goold (Paula Sparks) was able to hold an abbreviated school day where scholars were able to salute the flag – albeit with a suspiciously

missing flag. They also completed some morning exercises, practiced reading from *McGuffey Readers*, and cyphered on slates. There was a penmanship lesson, but without the customary goosefeather pens. We believe a mischievous scholar may have hid them as a prank. The day ended with an old-fashioned "Spelldown" or spelling bee.

All went well in our makeshift classroom. One girl enjoyed reading from the *McGuffey Reader* so much, she asked where she might get one to have at home. And apparently, Mrs. Goold was a rousing success. The scholars requested she be their substitute teacher whenever they need one!



Meet Penny Loura By Haley Pal

For those of you who are longtime members of the Windham Historical Society, you are well acquainted with our Historian and Curator, Penny Loura. But if you are new to our organization, you may not have met this dedicated and hardworking member of the Society team. Since 2007, Penny has put in endless hours of service in a diverse number of areas.

Her time with the Windham Historical Society began with a conversation with the Society's former Historian, the late Kay Soldier. Kay mentioned to Penny that the Society could use some help in recruiting new members. Penny immediately took the reins and has been with us ever since. These days, Penny takes in all of our accessions and carefully labels and photographs each one. She also answers all the queries that come in via letter, phone, and email. She meets weekly with the Archive team updating our archives on the Society's website. This is a painstaking process and a labor of love for all the team members and something that will be appreciated for generations to come.

In addition, Penny is a member of the Program Committee and is always thinking of new ways for our members to have some fun with history via creative programs. Some interesting topics have included a trip to a miniature outdoor railroad, talks about women's suffrage; a history of the Windham Correction Center; a discussion about the archaeological dig on River Road; and many, many more too numerous to mention.

If there is a fundraising event, you can be sure you'll find Penny there. Whether as a volunteer or as a participant, she puts in an appearance to show her support for the Society.

Penny grew up in the White Rock section of Gorham and attended Gorham schools. After getting married and having two sons, she decided to further her education and attended Westbrook College where she earned a nursing degree. She was employed at Maine Medical Center for 40 years, beginning as a nurse's aide, then an LPN and finally an RN before her retirement. She enjoys genealogy, reading, knitting, travel, music and walking in her spare time. She and her husband presently live in Gorham.

Membership Corner

By Carol Manchester

For this last year Windham Historical Society membership has remained steady, holding at around 235 currently. At the May meeting, the Society Board granted complimentary memberships to four contractors for their respective forms of generosity regarding the move of the Old Grocery last fall. New members include **Dave Johnson, Jim Elder, Cole Watson, and Symonds Foundations**. Members **Dr. Donald Boutilier, Julie Johnson, and Norma Rogers** now have lifetime memberships and new members to the Society since the last newsletter are **Roscoe Grant, Barbara Tolman, and Michelle Van Summern**, all of Windham. We look forward to meeting each of you at one the events that are planned for the upcoming months. *Welcome!*

Windham Then and Now

By Haley Pal

The C Bar C Ranch



Ken Mackenzie at the C Bar C Ranch.



The Windham Farmers Market welcomes the community these days.

In the warmer weather months, people enjoy getting outside in the open air to hear the lively sound of good country music. In the 1940s and 50s, the place to go in Windham was the C Bar C Ranch located behind where the Stockhouse Restaurant is today on Turning Leaf Drive.

On Sunday afternoons, Windham residents would gather to listen to the “hillbilly” music of singer Ken Mackenzie, a very popular performer of the time. The venue was out back in the woods and featured a stage, seating, and a concession stand, making it a wonderful way for locals to spend some time on a hot summer day.

Mackenzie was a popular radio star on WGAN in Portland and he also headed up a traveling music show. It featured Ken and his wife Simone and their talented son, Little Ken.

There were also three pairs of female singers that entertained the crowd, Dot and Jean, Toodles and Jeanie, and Dot and Gloria. Vocalist Betty Gribben was another member of the ensemble and she was a real fan favorite. Their repertoire included yodeling, story songs, hymns and duets and their popularity was legendary in these parts.

The C Bar C Ranch has been gone for quite some time, but the land where it once stood is still serving the purpose of a gathering spot for the people in our community. These days, on Saturday mornings, the Windham Farmers Market is open for business selling everything from vegetables and flowers to locally raised beef, baked goods and organic jams and jellies to artisan crafts and charcuterie boards. Be sure to stop by, pick up some goodies, and show your support for Windham’s local businesses.

Programs

By Carol Manchester

Now that Maine is emerging from its many COVID19 restrictions, including mask requirements outdoors, the Windham Historical Society has two outside activities planned for this summer and fall.

PACK A PICNIC, SPOON A SUNDAY: Scheduled for **Saturday, July 24**, this fun and refreshing event will begin at **noon on our Village Green**. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket, pack a picnic lunch or purchase some takeout, and pay us a visit. Ice cream and toppings for sundaes will be compliments of the Windham Historical Society. Come with your spouse, your children, your grandchildren, and/or your friends for some fresh air, sociability, and ice cream. There will be no formal program, but if you should ask, Society members are always eager to share our Village Green accomplishments and hopes for the future. This event is free to the public, but donations are always welcome.

ARLINGTON CEMETERY, PART 1 is the latest in our series of cemetery tours that we’ve been having over the past few years. This year, we will take you on a trip through Arlington Cemetery in North Windham located on Route 302 across the street from the Little Meetinghouse and next to the Fire Station.

We will share several stories about many familiar Windham families on **Sunday, September 26th, beginning at 1 p.m.** For the many who have been following our Facebook page this year, you have been enjoying the daily diary excerpts from Lena Megguier, a young South Windham woman who was employed as a housemaid in Portland back in 1898. These diary entries give us a glimpse of the simple life that she led at the turn of the 20th century. Both Lena and her husband Caleb Smith are buried in Arlington and Haley Pal will speak about Lena. Other Society members will talk about some of the Kennards, Lambs, and Manchesters as well. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided. Rain date is the following Sunday, October 3, at 1p.m.

Donations

By Karen Lougee

Thank you all for your generosity.

- A general donation was received from **Muriel Jackson**.
- Contributions for the May Day Bouquet program were received from **Patty Buck, Diane Lavigne, Sue Nichols, Haley and Andrew Pal, and Susan and Sam Simonson.**

Curator's Corner

By Penny Loura

- **Carol Manchester** donated a number of items including a bill of sale for service dated 1967, a standard pattern for ladies collarettes (2 different styles), an original 10-cent letter to Doris Manchester regarding an airplane ride in 1921, an old newspaper article from the *Maine Sunday Telegram* entitled "Make Your Own Power," by Lawrence Smith.
- **Kelly Dearborn** gave the Society a scrapbook via the Gorham Historical Society which had 26 articles that included the 45th wedding anniversary for Mr. and Mrs. Frank McDonald of Shady Lane Farm in Windham Center. Another invitation in the scrapbook is for a 60th surprise birthday party for Stephen Webb. There were also some temperance posters, two announcements/invitations to attend the Methodist Episcopal Church at South Windham to hear Reverend Bailey G. Lipsky talk. One was dated 1913. There is also a poster about the Friends School senior exhibition in 1904. A few other anniversary and wedding announcements are also in the album.
- **Gloria Barry** gifted the Society 30 newsletters from Baker Refrigeration titled *This 'n That at Baker* from September 1950 through March 1953. There are also 23 unidentified photos from outings and events at Baker.
- **Kelly Dearborn** donated a black and white photo of White's Bridge taken from the water; a gift of the Gorham Historical Society.
- **Ken Woodbury** donated a hand-forged flintlock musket. Donor says it could be the gun that killed Chief Polin. He also donated a genealogy of the Manchester family.
- **Laurel Parker** shared numerous handbooks on Girl Scouts and Brownies with us. She also donated a Shirley Temple doll with homemade clothing.
- **Patty Buck** gave the Society a washboard patented in 1915, a child's shoe form, a report card for Mary Lowell for the year 1931-1932 at Newhall School, and a primer for Arithmetic.
- **Merry Chapin** provided a copy of a paper with a description of parameters to River Road dated June 5, 1740.
- **Wendy Loring** gave the Society a marble plaque with commemorative coins attached given to June Hawkes for her hard work in preparation for the 250th celebration for the Town of Windham.
- **Emma Gilman** has donated several old photos that include Babb's Bridge, five men sitting at a table, the Moses Little House, the Mac Lyons house, and three pieces of Confederate money. She also provided photos of the Newhall School classes of 1933 and 1940. Other donated items include an article about Anne Elder Berry and about the Aikins family reunion. There is also an article about the fire at Miserve's Store (formerly Boody's) in the collection. Her gift also included two sewing baskets, one used by Emma's mother and the other used by Warren Gilman's mother and an infant's hair comb and brush set.
- **Jean Keef** has provided the Society with a large egg basket and an 8" x 10" photo of George and Jean Keef's home and chicken farm on Route 115.
- **David Robinson** gifted a 16" x 20" framed aerial view of the Androscoggin Pulp Mill.
- **Bob Miele** donated a pen and ink drawing of Arthur and Janet Perrin's house on Webb Road.



SOCIETY ACQUIRES TREASURED FAMILY HEIRLOOM

Margery Dean Webb is the last living descendant in the long line of the Webb family of Windham that dates all the way back to the town's tenth settler, Samuel Webb. Her oldest family ancestor was James Webb, Samuel's sixth son. Her family roots are also touched by the Lowell family of Windham and one of her Lowell family ancestors left behind a wonderful legacy to share with posterity.

Captain Oliver Hawkes Lowell was Margery's great grandmother's brother. He was born in Windham in October 1829. He was married to Olive S. Varney until her death in 1857. He then

attended Tufts College in 1860 and became a teacher. In November of that year, he was employed at the Gorham Academy and his students presented him with an impressive ebony cane trimmed with a gold head. The inscription on the cane reads, "Presented to OH Lowell by the students of WCHS on Nov. 2, 1860." Captain Lowell treasured the gift and left it in the custody of his family when he was mustered



into the US Army in 1862 to fight in the Civil War. Sadly, he passed away on the battlefield at Gettysburg and was buried in an unmarked grave. He lived a relatively short life, but the gift he left behind will continue to keep his memory alive for many years to come. The Windham Historical Society is grateful for the gift.

I Want to Join! Fill out the form below and write a check made payable to the Windham Historical Society. Mail to:
Windham Historical Society, PO Box 1475, Windham, ME 04062

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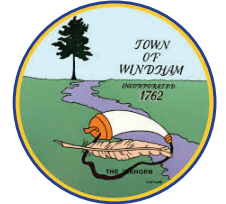
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