

Washington Historical Society Newsletter
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 SPRING 2023 EDITION

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President's Message

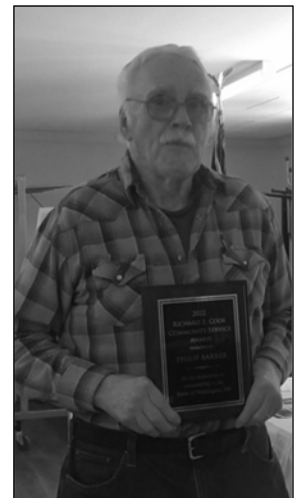
Winter almost had us fooled, it has been very up and down with some very warm months. We went through the month of February with no storms, It has been 54 years since we had a big one. In February 1969 we had a sizeable snow storm every other day for ten days, accumulating more than five feet. Route 31 north got so narrow that if you met a car you might have to back up in order to pass.

It appears that we are getting organized for a great year of programs and displays. We will be doing some reorganizing of the barn also. Four new windows were ordered for the museum to replace some faulty ones, they will be installed later this spring when we can access the building.

Some of the escapees to the south have been hinting on when they may be returning to our midst. We wish you safe travels.

One of my previously mentioned projects is to have a "brain storming" session to figure out how to get younger people interested in the Society. This we will have to work on.

At Town Meeting 2023, Phil Barker was presented with the "Richard Cook Community Service Award" for his many years of service to the Town on several committees and boards, as perambulator, and so much more.



Museum Archivists Report

It has been an interesting winter and as soon as we thought we would have time to get to the work to be done at the museum we literally got snowed out! Before the summer season begins we will have new windows facing the barn and at the back of our building in place of the picture window. We do have to take care of our building.

Just before Covid we were given a wonderful collection of Washington memorabilia that had been collected over the years by our member Stephen Crain who lived in Maine. Yes, he was a relative of the Cranes who lived here, but was another branch of the family. Our large display this year will be of his collection.

We are pleased to have an interesting day of "Fiber Artists" planned. Janet Sillars will join us on July 15th to show us how a "Great" or "Walking Wheel" works and we have well-known teacher and demonstrator, Pricilla Parmenter, coming as well. Participants can learn about and try their hands (and feet) at spinning; feel the various fibers; and enjoy visiting with other spinners. All are welcome and invited to come join the fun. The society has in our collection a Great Wheel and three or four spinning wheels. At this event we will learn if they are in working order.

As always, volunteers are wanted and needed to help host the Barn and Museum during the summer. Each shift is only two hours and it is never a boring time as there is much to see and learn, as well as interesting visitors to chat with. Please let Ellen or Gwen know if and when you can help. Shifts for the Museum and Barn are 10- 12 and 12- 2 on Saturdays and 1-3 at the Schoolhouse in East Washington. It would be a shame to be unable to open our beautiful buildings to the public because we do not have a host (or hosts) during a shift.

We look forward to seeing you soon..
Gwen Gaskell & Ellen Hofford



Snowed in is not an excuse to not go to the Barn or the Museum.

Pictures from the March 14—15, 2023
Nor'easter.

We're trying a new idea where people can share their remembrances of Washington. Whether you've lived in Town for a decade or for a lifetime, you must have memories of "back then" and we'd love to hear them.

Memories by Phil Barker

As young kids the boys and sometimes girls played in the sandbox with their toys, and the girls were more apt to be on the porch or under a tree playing with their paper dolls or bigger dolls.

As we entered grade school, bicycles and sleds were the thing to have; usually hand-me-downs' from some other family. I believe that I was the first to buy a new bike, a 3 speed English bike, because I was working weekends with a surveyor down at Highland Lake. I was 11 at the time, earning 50 cents per hour. The bike cost \$49.95.

We used to ride all over the place, even through the woods, on old logging roads. Our parents didn't know where we were, but we would be home by supper time. No helmets, kneepads, or elbow pads. And we lived. There were accidents, but no arrests or lawsuits. We also played in the woods and often built lean-tos from poles and boughs. Some were pretty elaborate.

Of course, the bikes got put away and the sleds came out in the winter. They were usually a Christmas present, and if you had a Flexible-Flyer, you had the best. There were basically three or four families involved here in the village. The Barkers, Ottersons, Cilleys, and Rolfs. Bill Otterson had made and painted an easel type sign that read "CAUTION CHILDREN SLIDING" and we were to take that sign and set it up at the bottom of whatever hill we were using, because we were sliding on town roads. Nothing but a little local traffic then. The roads were not sanded much then, or they skipped sanding if we were using that particular hill.

There were several good sledding roads. Fisher Hill (Lempster Mtn. Rd.), where we usually slid from the elbow down to Harry Davisons but could go all the way down to the little bridge on 31. McNeil Hill (Old Marlow Rd.) was good and fast. Faxon Hill, if it got plowed by Abner Barker for sugaring or woodlot access. May Hill (Rt. 31). And the Barkers yard beside the store which was always plowed and was a favorite afternoon spot down to Alfred Tandys. Once in a while if there was ice and the crust was thick enough, we would slide on the hillside fields and pastures. That's where most of the 'accidents' occurred if we broke through the crust and plowed face first into the crust and snow.

We used to split our wood by hand with a 6 pound maul and wedges, now it is done with a hydraulic splitter. A great invention.

We used to ride in the back of the pickup and the dump truck, and on the mowing machine and hay rake to and from the hayfields, there would be trouble over that now a days, also riding on top of the load of hay.

The Town did a very limited amount of sanding back in the 50's, and it amounted to someone standing in the back of the dump truck broadcasting the sand by the shovel full. Then there was an upgrade to a tow behind ground driven sander where two men in the back of the dump truck with the body tilted up at various angles and the men assisted the gravity of the sand out through a 12" hole in the tailgate onto the spinning disk. Now finally we have hydraulic sanders, one man operation rather than three. And rather than spot sand the hills and curves the entire road is sanded.

There is a State law that says that towns shall perambulate their boundaries every seven years, I did that for many years. Washington has seven bounding towns. I learned by tagging along with my father, and my kids tagged along with me.

Days Gone By

By Vivian Clark

My family ate together and worked together. We had a garden and burned wood for heat (as I do today). Usually on Thanksgiving morning we cut wood on the old saw rig and put it into the shed. Dad had cut the wood from the sugar lot and stacked it in the wood yard. Dad would sell wood for \$10 a cord.

Being one of seven kids, there was always plenty to do. We helped with the cooking, cleaning and laundry. The laundry was done with an old wringer type washing machine and we hung the clothes out on the clothesline to dry. When it was dry we folded it and brought it in and put it away. We did not have automatic washers and dryers.

When I was in high school, a TV was given to us. It was a big box that had a screen about eight or nine inches square. We didn't watch it much, there were only two channels, 4 and 7 from Boston. We listened to the radio a lot for the news and weather and couple of serial programs that were on once a week. Dr. Christians Office and Only the Shadow Knows! Dad always enjoyed The Voice of Firestone after we went to bed.

We had cows that we kept in my Grandmother's barn, so naturally we did haying every summer. We had to take the cows out to pasture every morning and back in for milking in the evening.

During the day we went hiking in the woods and built forts, climbed trees and explored! Sometimes I went over to Millen Pond and sat in one of Waldo's old boats and went fishing. I used to catch some pretty good perch there.

Waldo was a "way of life" for the kids around the pond. He had a rickety old truck with benches along the sides and he delivered milk and ice to the people around the pond and around town. The kids would climb into the truck and ride up town to the store and play ball on the common while he was on this milk route. Waldo was a very kind and quiet man who loved children and had quite a gathering of friends. He cut ice out of the pond in the winter and stored it in the ice house packed with saw dust for insulation so it would keep for summer. In the winter he would clear the snow off what seemed like a large area of the pond and put wood ashes into buckets, pour kerosene in them and set them on fire for lights and warming spots for a skating party for many of us kids.

We did not have computers or cell phones. Some Sundays we all went for ride in our old Model T and later the Plymouth to visit a relative. That was a treat.

When I was about 10, there was an old trunk beside the road. There were three of us playing around it and we saw an old lady coming down the road so we decided to climb into it to hide. Well! We did and closed the cover, then it locked! We panicked and started screaming and hollering. Fortunately she heard us and went and got my mother who was able to get the trunk open. We never tried that trick again! (The "old" lady was undoubtedly younger than I am now.)

When we moved from Half Moon Pond Rd up in to the center of town, Mom and Dad had built the log cabin store, we had a bigger barn and still had the wood to get every year – only more of it as the store was also heated with wood.

I went to high school in Keene and lived with a family in Westmoreland who also had animals that I helped with. They also had a small home for handicapped children which piqued my interest in that field, so I studied nursing before getting married and having my own family.

Life goes on and now all the new technology is in effect and I am not up to date. To me those were the good old days! I think it is too bad the kids of today miss out on so much fun.

My mother made most of our clothes. Many shorts, skirts and dresses were made of printed grain bags that we bought from a chicken farmer on the East Washington Road in Hillsboro. We walked to school everyday and home for lunch at noon. School started with the Pledge of Allegiance and singing America. We had one teacher with all 8 grades in one room, up to 24 students. It was very progressive learning.

I used to babysit for 50 cents an hour. In the summer I had a good worm and night crawler business. I would go out at night, especially after a shower with a flashlight, to pick up night crawlers, then keep them in a wooden nail keg in the shed to keep them cool. That was a good summer business and kept me in spending money. When we went to Newport, I could go shopping and buy a pair of sneakers or a blouse for 99 cents!

OH! For the Good Old Days!

Washington Has Changed **By Gwen Gaskell**

I am the next to the oldest in a family of seven children, four girls and then three boys growing up in the 1940's and 50's. There are only ten years between the oldest and youngest. By the age of five we began to have chores; set the table, wipe dishes, sort the dirty clothes by color on wash day. There was no automatic washer and dryer. We had an electric tub washer with the agitator in the middle and there was a wringer with two rollers that went around to squeeze the water out and it ran back into the wash tub. The tub was filled with a hose from a pipe and drained with a larger pipe out into a garden or onto the lawn. We had a second tub without the wringer to rinse the clothes and would put them back through the wringer, then shake them out and lay them in the basket to go out to the clothes lines to be hung up. I remember my grandmother telling me that you want to hang like items together and have things straight on the lines because people can tell what kind of a home you keep by the way the clothes are hung. As we grew taller and older that became one of our chores, along with washing dishes and peeling vegetables for dinner.

Until the boys got big enough we girls had to fill the wood box in cold weather, help saw the wood with the big saw rig" which had a big circular saw that made a lot of noise and I did not like that, so I would take the job the furthest from the saw, which was usually handing the three or four foot lengths of wood to Dad who did the sawing. Then someone had to hold the piece that was cut and throw it onto the trailer which would then go to the house or shed to get thrown in and then stacked for the winter. I didn't mind throwing it in and enjoyed stacking the wood into tall piles in the shed or cellar.

With a large family it was economical to have two or three cows, which we did, so we had our own milk and made butter from the cream two or three times a week in the summer. We would take turns churning the butter, then Dad would "work it" on the butter board with a "paddle" to get the water out of it. It would then get wrapped in parchment paper and put into the freezer for future use.

We had our own mean supply as the male calves would be raised as "baby beef" or kept longer for beef. Occasionally Dad would raise a pig and I had chickens as a 4-H project for a few years. I enjoyed the cows and would clean the stalls and brush them. We would lead them to pasture in the morning and get them in time for milking as the pasture wasn't usually outside the barn door. In the winter they were in the barn most of the time so we would let them out to get water and move around for a bit. The stable area in the barn was on the south side with windows for the sun to shine in for warmth and the hay loft was above. It used to be said that a farmer should have half of his hay left in February to have enough to feed the animals until the grass got green.

Having the cows made another chore – cutting and getting in the hay for the winter. Dad had a pair of work horses when I was little but soon got a small tractor which he would drive around the field. One of us girls would ride the cutter which was pulled behind the tractor and operate the cutter bar. After a day or two of drying we would ride the hay rake and "trip" it to make rows of hay ready to be picked up and loaded on the hay wagon to go to the barn. As Dad would load the hay, we would have to walk and jump on it to pack it and make it stay in place so we could get a big load without having it fall off on the way up or down the road to the barn. We also learned to drive the tractor in the field.

I enjoyed doing things in the house, watching Mom sew and cook and I like the animals. I did not enjoy sports other than swimming or ice skating.

At this time the population of Washington was only about 200 people with a few extras in summertime on Mil-len Pond, Half Moon Pond and Island Pond. There were not nearly as many cottages then and they had not been converted into year round homes at that time. Since my childhood we have seen the development of Highland Lake which was known as Long Pond, the back side of Island Pond which became known as Wash-ington Lake Estates and Ashuelot Pond which became known as Lake Ashuelot.

I remember coal trucks delivering coal in town from Hillsboro. Delivery trucks were small, one ton trucks or small panel bodied trucks, much smaller than the trucks today. You seldom saw an oil delivery truck and never propane gas trucks, 18 wheel trucks or log trucks with a trailer behind carrying three or four big stacks of logs, and certainly never saw septic tank clean out trucks. I recall when septic emptying was a new business. A man convinced my Mom that if our septic had never been pumped it had to be ready to fail so she should let him pump it out, thjs she did. I don't know what the price was but possibly \$35. When Dad got home and she proudly told him about it, he read her the riot act, informing her that when a system is used all the time it takes care of itself and never has to be pumped out. It was just another racket! Well; I still think of that when I get ours pumped.

There were not many cars; it was a luxury for a family to own one, and all cars were black. Our first car was a Model A and then we had a Plymouth sedan before "graduating" to a Chevy Suburban that could transport the whole family as well as carry supplies for the store which Dad and Mom had started in their house on the corner of Half Moon Pond Road and Cross Street. They had created the store by enclosing half of the front porch and then extending and taking the family's dining room. At that time they got a deep freeze so they could sell ice cream as well as have a freezer to keep our own meat and butter. Until then they had rented a "freezer locker" which was a big drawer at Dallas Cutters in Hillsboro (where JD's was most recently). In 1952 Mom and Dad bought the Fred Ball home, across from where the "Brick Store" in the center of town had gone out of business and built the log cabin store.

Calendar of upcoming meetings

- April 10 Three Generations of One Old Washington Family, portrayed by Gwen Gaskell
This program will be held at the museum and is considered a "dress rehearsal" for the August program. The audience is to ask questions and make suggestions to improve the program. Brief meeting at 6:30 followed by the program
- May 8 Gail Golec will present a program titled RELIEF
Naming a child something trendy is nothing new! 18th and 19th Century gravestones show us society has always had a penchant for interesting names, often attributable to a parent's religious background, philosophical bent or political beliefs.
- June 12 Kim Varney Chandler: Covered Bridges
This will be an interesting history of the covered bridges in our area of New Hampshire.
- July 10 To Be Announced
- July 15 SPIN IN at the Museum and Barn. 12—3 pm
Janet Sillars will demonstrate the Great or Walking Wheel and Pricilla Parmenter, spinning teacher and demonstrator will be with us to spin and answer questions. ALL spinners are invited to bring their wheels and take part In this fun afternoon. See and feel the various fibers. This is for the whole family. Lemonade and cold water provided.
- Aug. 14 Annual Meeting. Program: Three Generations of One Old Washington Family portrayed by Gwen Gaskell in costume and with information gleaned from a collection of diaries dating back to the 1860's.
- Sep 11 Marian Baker will share her experiences helping create an archives for Quakers in East Africa where she has been working several months of the past 12 years to encourage and lift women there.
- Oct 9 Tom Barton is an avid hiker both on foot and on snowshoes, biker, and woodsman in search of the largest trees and is our "weatherman". He will show pictures and answer questions about his adventures.

November reverts back to Zoom meetings.

Please send suggestions for programs you might be interested in.

Updates and information always available at WNHHS.org

Washington Historical Society
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Washington, NH 03280

ANNUAL MEMEBERSHIP LEVELS are changing. If you are already a member, you will be receiving a notice to renew in the mail or via email. If you would like to join, you can join on-line and pay by credit card, or visit the museum.

Donations can be made online using a credit card or by check to WNHHS, PO Box 90, Washington, NH 03280

PLEASE NOTE: As a non-profit historical society, we qualify with many companies for matching grants provided the company you work for, or are retired from, supports such benefits.

Please accept my donation of \$_____ to help WNHHS continue its work.

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