

## Washington Historical Society Newsletter

WWW.WNHHS.ORG  
FALL 2020 EDITION

### Washington Historical Society Officers

President:	Bill Mulcahy
Vice President:	Bert Bodnar
Treasurer:	Elaine Crandall
Secretary:	Marian Baker
Archivist:	Gwen Gaskell
Board of Directors:	Susan Fairchild Steve Yusko
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Barn Committee:	Phil Barker Volunteers needed
Museum Committee:	Gwen Gaskell Volunteers needed
Newsletter Committee:	Barbara Gaskell Gwen Gaskell Contributors welcome
Program Committee:	Susan Fairchild Steve Yusko

### *President's Message*

History is filled with momentous events, and when one of these events impacts many of us at the same time, a “shared experience” results. The Great Depression of the 1930’s, World War 2, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and September 11<sup>th</sup> are just a few examples of shared experiences that have occurred during our collective lifetimes.

As we are now in the midst of the latest shared experience of our time, the COVID-19 Pandemic, I felt it important to utilize my very first “President’s Message” to talk about its impact on our Washington Historical Society.

By almost any measure, 2020 has not been the year that we had hoped it would be. The COVID-19 Pandemic seemingly came out of nowhere and quickly impacted almost every aspect of our lives. Our world changed quickly, and, not for the first time for most of us, so did our understanding of “normal.” Terms such as “PPE” and “Social Distancing” suddenly dominate our language, and mask wearing, frequent handwashing, and the use of hand sanitizer dominate our daily activities.

The WHS has not escaped the impact. Our monthly potluck dinners and in-person meetings, a beloved social event for all of us, had to be cancelled, and we are not able to welcome visitors to our Museum and Archives building. Traditional fundraising activities could not take place, adding an element of economic worry.

It would be understandable if, in the face of so many virus-related limitations, we had simply decided to close down this year and wait the virus out. Some organizations took that route. I am very proud to say that your Officers and Board Members made a different choice, and have been working tirelessly together over these many months to find creative ways to safely overcome as many virus-related challenges as we could.

In July we resumed our monthly meetings in virtual form using the ZOOM app, which also allowed us to again bring you wonderful guest speakers from New Hampshire Humanities

(NHH) as well as from private sources. We have also taken full advantage of the temporary removal of NHH's 3-speaker-per-year limit and are committed to bringing you additional monthly speakers for the rest of our 2020-2021 operating year (with the exception of December), whereas in past years we stopped from November through March.

While it wasn't possible to open our Museum and Archives building without exposing both our volunteers and our collections to too much risk, with full observance of federal and state guidelines and the use of PPE, we safely opened the East Washington Schoolhouse for regular hours (Saturdays in July and August from 1-3) and the Barn Museum was opened several times on request to very small groups.

We have maintained visibility among both our members and the greater Washington community by increasing member email updates, posting to the Washington Town Facebook page, and publishing events news in the Stone Bridge Post. An article that appeared in our Fall 2019 newsletter was featured in a very well-produced segment on WMUR-9's New Hampshire Chronicle that aired on September 16th, and a companion feature was published in the September 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Stone Bridge Post. Both of these contained multiple mentions of the WHS, and were very well-received by the public.

Unable to pursue regular fundraising activities, we applied for, and were awarded, special one-time funding via a "Cares Act" grant offered through NHH by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This money helped us meet some of our traditional operating expenses, and allowed us to print our new "Washington Center Walking Tour", update and reprint a WHS informational flyer, and contract for necessary repairs to the Barn Museum (to be done in the Spring of 2021). Additionally, since we could not give visitors access to our Museum gift shop, we developed an "open air" gift shop and brought it to the Saturday Farmer's Market on the Common. Support from both WHS members and the general public for our Washington-themed items has been overwhelmingly positive!

Work on ongoing projects also continued. Bert Bodnar successfully completed negotiations between the Town and property owners on the restoration of the Town Pound. Most of that work has now been completed. Marian Baker finished a large scraping, repair and painting project on the East Washington Schoolhouse shed. Gwen Gaskell continued to keep vital statistics and other important archive records up-to-date. Elaine Crandall is making sure that our bills get paid and that our books are in good order.

New projects were also started and completed. Gwen Gaskell and Susan Fairchild led a significant project to create a "Washington Center Walking Tour" covering many buildings and places of special interest in and around our historic town center. The completed booklet is now a solid seller at our open-air gift shop on the Common.

Perhaps our most important accomplishment this year was the creation of a special WHS COVID-19 Archive. This special initiative, led by Susan Fairchild and Marian Baker, kicked off during our September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting with a special WHS-produced presentation entitled "The Marks We Leave Behind." The goal is to provide you and others a place to record your personal experiences of life during the current Pandemic. You can do this in a number of ways – with written or recorded stories, poems, artwork, photographs – whichever is most meaningful to you. Submissions will be permanently preserved, with the goal of making them accessible to future researchers to help them gain a better understanding of people's experiences during this challenging time. If you missed the kick off, or if you would like additional information on how you can participate, please visit our special webpage at <http://www.wnhhs.org/2020-marks.html>.

With your continued help and support, we will continue to find our way forward during these difficult times. Please take care, and stay well. We will come through this – together!

*Bill Mulcahy*



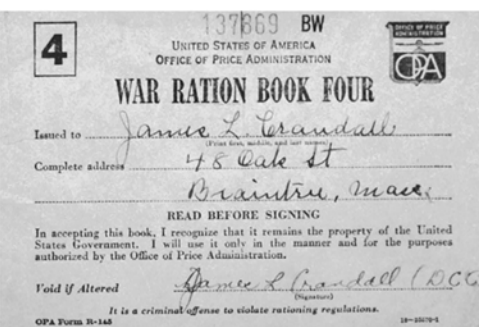
## Ringing in Victory and Other Memories of WW II By Jim Crandall

When I was asked to write this article, I considered it bad news; but eventually it became good news. It was bad because I wondered how anyone could think that I was old enough to remember World War II. Gradually as I thought about that slight, I realized that yes, I did remember some things in my life from that period and the war effort. That's the good news-- I remembered!

My first recollection from that period in Washington was from 1943 when electricity was first brought to Millen Pond and our camp. I remember because my mother and father strongly disagreed with one another on such a futuristic change to our living. Mom was in favor and dad disagreed, so we know who won. Prior to electricity, I clearly remember using oil lamps, some with an "Aladdin filament" for extra brightness. We used a wood stove for cooking that had an oven and a tank to heat and retain hot water. Our water was pumped to our house from my uncles next-door as they had a gas-operated pump, which frequently had to be hand pumped to increase the pressure. The water came to our house in a lead pipe, some of which is still buried in the woods. At last we had our own water from the pure water of Millen Pond! Those wanting spring water continued to get it from the "Story spring" (now Lundquist property), which is now closed.

The War had many effects on everyone. The Government urged all to have "Victory Gardens" to avoid shortages in food and to save food for the troops. My family had such a garden on the east side of our bridge on Millen Pond. The vegetables we raised in that garden as well as those purchased from Waldo Farnsworth, just west of the bridge, were used during the summer. More importantly my mother canned vegetables, applesauce, and large quantities of potatoes and took them to our home in Braintree, MA, to a special room in the cellar.

World War II also brought us rationing. I still have my Ration Books. My children had no idea of rationing so I did some research and found the following information. Soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and America's subsequent entrance into World War II, it became apparent that voluntary conservation on the Homefront was not going to suffice this time around. Restrictions on imported food, limitations on the transportation of goods due to a shortage of rubber tires, and a diversion of agricultural harvest to soldiers overseas all contributed to the US Government's decision to ration certain essential items. On January 30, 1942 the Emergency Price Control Act granted the Office of Price Administration the authority to set price limits and ration food and other commodities in order to discourage hoarding and ensure the equitable distribution of scarce resources. By the



spring Americans were unable to purchase sugar without government-issued food coupons. Vouchers for coffee were introduced in November, and by March 1943, meat, cheese, fats, canned fish, canned milk and other processed foods were added to the list of rationed provisions.

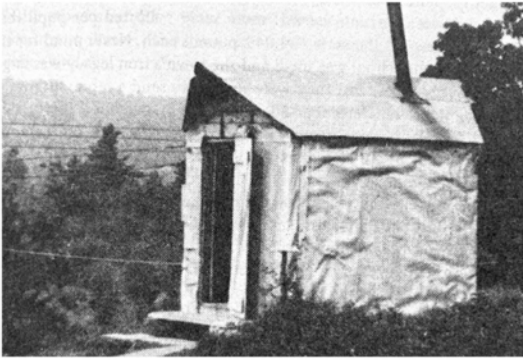
Every American was entitled to a series of war Ration Books filled with stamps that could be used to buy restricted items (along with payment), and within weeks of the first issuance more than 91% of the US households had them and used them.

Gas was in very short supply and was strictly rationed, there were few cars in town and I remember on at least one occasion taking a train from Hillsboro to Concord and thence to Boston and finally to Braintree. I also remember one car trip home in the fall listening to the Army-Navy football game. The Army stars were Doc Blanchard and Glen Davis: Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside. You can still look them up.

Several in Washington served as volunteer Plane Spotters to keep an eye out for German planes. The station was located on Cross Street off Half Moon Pond Road (Photo from p.321 of "Portrait of a Hill Town," used with permission of the authors, Ron & Grace Jager ). My sister Charlotte, known to all as "Stubby," was a volunteer, and despite all the charts with aircraft pictures she hoped the war did not come down to her ability



Jim Crandall ringing the Town Hall bell Celebrating the reopening of Upper Hall in 2018, just as he rang it in 1945 to celebrate the end of WW II



to recognize the planes! One day I decided to visit her by walking up to Town. It was very familiar and friendly along Millen Pond until I got to the Drew Farm (later Bachand and now Iadonisi). The reason I remember that walk is because from the Drew Farm on I was convinced, as a seven-year-old, that there were bears or lions behind every tree!

The War officially ended on August 14th 1945 (V-J Day), which I clearly remember. I must have walked, but somehow, I got to Town where many were celebrating in front of the Town Hall. Most likely there were a few bottles of rum for those older, but what I have always remembered is the ringing of the Town Bell announcing the good news to the far corners of Town. I was given a turn to ring the bell and particularly remember if you did not let go of the rope when you pulled down it would pull you up off your feet. Likely that was the start of my fondness for the “Heart of Washington,” Town Hall.

## NATHANIEL C. BURWASH

AN ARTIST LIVING AND WORKING IN WASHINGTON DURING THE DEPRESSION

By: Alan Jay Rom

We are living in unique times, and we don't seem to have a national response to overcome the suffering. But there were other unique times when there was a national response, and that was during the depression of the 1930s when the government organized programs to put people to work. There was the Rural Electrification program to connect people to the electric grid, the Civilian Conservation Corps to build highways and other projects for which we continue to see their results all around us today. There was also a project for the artists of our country – the writers, musicians and painters. One of those painters was Nathaniel C. Burwash, who lived and worked in a cabin he and his wife built in the woods of Washington.

Born in Los Angeles in 1906, but raised on a farm in Hudson Falls, New York, he studied wood design in Rochester, New York, and traveled to Europe during the years before the depression. He met Ida Brass, a city girl and they lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. When the Depression hit, they could not afford to live in the city, Nat was accepted by the Works Progress Administration (“WPA”) to work as an artist and was able to have his job transferred to Washington, where it would be less expensive to live.

Nat was a prolific painter. The way the program worked was that the artist was given money for supplies and to live on. They were required to turn in their work in order to get money for more supplies. Nat told me that he was admonished for turning out so many paintings and told to “slow down.” The artist's work belonged to the WPA and the program existed until the outbreak of World War II. Nat and Ida returned to Cambridge where they worked in the war effort.

While in Washington, their cabin, located in the woods off of the Bailey Road past a clearing (“parking lot”) at the end of Juniper Drive, consisted of a main living area with one alcove for their bedroom, one for his studio and one for the kitchen. There was a parlor stove in the living room and a cast-iron kitchen cook wood stove. That was the only source of heat, so Nat was outdoors each morning buck-sawing wood for the stoves. Ida kept the place immaculately clean and grew vegetables and stored them in the “cellar,” which was the space under the cabin that was built on boulders. They built an entrance to the cellar right under the kitchen, but it was only accessible by going outdoors. They built a well that was their refrigerator and they built an out-house, which was on the cold side in the winter. Their light source consisted of two hanging kerosene lamps and small kerosene lamps that could be carried from one spot to another. To earn extra money, Nat worked in the fields for Perley Crane, planting and hoeing potatoes. If someone was traveling to town, Nat gave them some money and a shopping list. A traveling food truck came up to the clearing periodically. There was no road to their cabin, only a path through the woods from a clearing. Nat would lug supplies through the woods using what he called a “scoot” which he told me was a sled. Nat never learned how to drive. There was no electricity, and, as he bragged, never any power tools on the property. When they moved back to Cambridge, they continued to come up to their cabin, but had to hire a taxi to take them up and back.

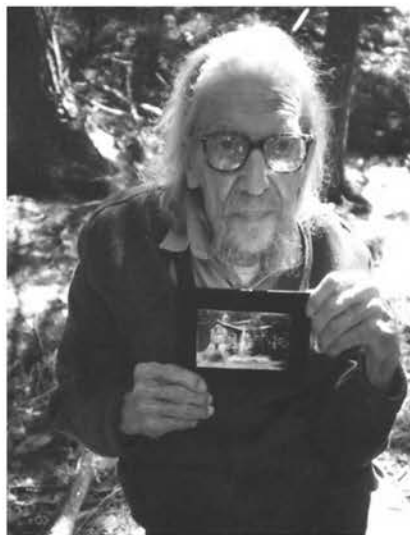
I met Nat and Ida when I first started coming up to Washington in 1952 with my aunt and uncle, Isabelle P. and Samuel S. Schiff, who had built a cabin nearby in the late 1940s. I was not yet 6, but we bonded quickly



and that lasted a lifetime. I spent many hours at their cabin and they at ours. They didn't have children, but used the phrase, "borrowed son," in referring to me, joking (or perhaps not) that they could return me at any time.

Fast forward to the 1990s. By then Nat was an accomplished wood sculptor; he did his last painting around 1951, as he wanted to do three-dimensional art working with wood. In the early 1990s, two arts administrators from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts opened a drawer in the NH State Library in Concord, NH, and discovered approximately 120 of Nat's WPA paintings. That coincided with a friend, Audrey Sylvester, the Artists Services Coordinator of the New Hampshire Council on the Arts, saying yes, "I know Nat; he is alive and living in Cambridge." That connection led to a traveling art show of his work. The State Library framed twenty paintings and they and his sculpture went on tour in a show entitled, "Finding Light in Dark Times: Then and Now." The show started at the State Library and traveled to libraries around New Hampshire, including a showing at the Shedd Free Library in Washington. While the State Library transported the paintings, I loaded my car with the sculpture and drove them (and Nat) to the next library on the list.

Nat died in January 2000, just short of his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday in February. I created a website to show his work and give a short biography [www.newdawntrust.com](http://www.newdawntrust.com). 100 of his WPA paintings are on the website for viewing. His sold and unsold sculpture is there too. The paintings are still at the State Library and I have his unsold sculpture. Perhaps we are entering a time when a new WPA will return. Will other "Nat Burwash's" come to Washington to live and work?



On the left above, Nat at the time he lived in Washington (photo by Sam Rothman). On the right, one of the last photos I took of Nat at his old camp in the Fall of 1999. He is holding a photo of the camp from the outside.

Inside the Burwash camp as it looked when they lived there



Haying in Perley Crane's field  
by Nathaniel Burwash





**A party with friends at the  
Burwash camp  
By Nathaniel Burwash**

**Notes from the Museum by Gwen Gaskell**

The Society is always looking for new blood and this year we got a much needed infusion in the way of Bill Mulcahy, Susan Fairchild and Stephen Yusko. Bill stepped right in as President this summer and Susan and Steve are on the Board. Steve's mother was President of our society years ago. Susan was invaluable in her work on the Walking Tour Booklet, and she and Bill manned our table at the Farmers Market this summer.

I have had to step back from my outside interests in the past year but am able to still do some things from home, besides knit, for which I am thankful. One is the gathering of info for the newsletter, getting it from the printer, folding it and putting on the labels and stamps to get it into the mail. Elaine provides the labels and stamps so this is a joint effort to bring you the latest updates of the Society and Town. I continue to clip Washington news and obituaries in the local papers and print the Selectmen's minutes for our records. Work at the museum is on hold for the time being, but it will get caught up.

The old school house has had new clapboards this summer as well as new roof shingles. The painters were here making it nice and white again. With the reshingling of the Church roof, all the of the buildings on the Common have matching roofs now.

Wishing all of you well, and safe from Covid with blessings in the new year.

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After an absence of some years, the WHS returned to the farmers market this year, and Susan Fairchild makes the first sale to Heidi Chobot - a copy of the newly published walking tour of Washington Center, prepared by Susan and Heidi's mother, Gwen Gaskell.

This year, the renovation of the town pound was completed by the addition of a layer of stone to the existing front wall and a gate added to the entrance.



## ITEMS FOR SALE

### FEATURING FAVORITE LANDMARKS OF WASHINGTON, NH

To order contact: Elaine Crandall (603) 495-3416 or [ecrandall@verizon.net](mailto:ecrandall@verizon.net)

Gwen Gaskell (603) 495-3231 or [jimgwen@gsinet.net](mailto:jimgwen@gsinet.net)

**History of Washington. Original reprint. \$20.00**

**Portrait of a Hill Town. \$15.00**

**History Package. \$40.00** Includes the *History*, *Portrait* and *Sacred Deposit* as well as a colored picture

**Afghan. \$45.00** Featuring scenes of Washington woven into a beautiful memento of our town. It is green on an off white background.

**Sketch of the Common** by Ronna Safford Kowal—Large \$35.00, Medium \$25.00

**Trivet. \$5.00** A 6" x 6" ceramic trivet or tile, suitable for hot or cold, with a leather backing, featuring a color photograph of the three steepled buildings in the center of town. Gift boxed.

**Postcards and Notecards of Gustine Hurd Images. \$0.50 each / \$5.00 per set.** Two photographs taken in the early 1880's by Gustine Hurd have been turned into postcards and notecards. The single fold notecards are packaged in sets of 4 with envelopes. Two notecards of each picture or four of one picture.

**Glass Medallion. \$5.00** This 3" medallion depicts the Town Hall. The picture is adapted from an early 1880's wet plate photograph taken by Gustine Hurd. Available in blue or green.

**Booklet *History of Camp Morgan*. \$25.00** A compilation of information from multiple sources brought together in one place outlining the history of Camp Morgan from it's earliest days to the present.

**DVD. \$5.00** *Meetinghouse: The Heart of Washington, NH*. 225 years of affectionate, sometimes contentious, interplay between generations of Washington citizens and the Meetinghouse on the Town Common.

**New Walking Tour of Washington Center booklet. \$5.00**

**New Mugs \$5.00 each.** Choose the iconic Town Common buildings or the East Washington School-House #5.



*All items can be shipped for an additional charge. Call or email Elaine Crandall or Gwen Gaskell at the contact info above to ascertain the amount required. It will be in the range of \$4 to \$10 per package, depending on what is being shipped and your zip code.*

Washington Historical Society  
PO Box 90  
Washington, NH 03280

ANNUAL MEMEBERSHIP DUES are \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family (including children under 16). For those who would like to contribute more to help us cover our expenses, we have a sustaining membership for \$25. The membership year is August 1 through July 31. We appreciate your continued interest and support of our projects. New members are always welcome. If you would like to join us as a member, please complete the form below and send to THE WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 90, WASHINGTON, NH 03280. If you know of someone who might be interested in our newsletter, please let us know or pass this one on to them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participating family names: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone # Winter \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership level: \$10 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Family \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Sustaining \_\_\_\_\_

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.

**Email: [washingtonhistoricalsociety@wnhhs.org](mailto:washingtonhistoricalsociety@wnhhs.org)**