

Washington Historical Society Newsletter

FALL 2004 EDITION

President's Message

It is an honor to serve as President of the Washington Historical Society (WHS). As a "summer" person for many years, I now look forward to my first year of living full time at Millen Pond in Washington. While learning about the internal workings of the WHS, I am continually amazed at the conviction and dedication of the committee members, volunteers, and friends of our Society.

The WHS is truly blessed with an active and supportive membership of hard-working people who are stretched to their limits. The Historical Society needs your help. We are all aware the town is growing at a rapid rate. Volunteering just a few hours a month is a wonderful opportunity for both established and recent arrivals to be involved, as there is a never-ending list of Washington Historical Society activities that volunteers are needed for. These activities can lead to meaningful associations and an awareness (sometimes humorous) of the community.

The Society's participation in the NH Wool Festival during Mother's Day weekend, the 4th of July Flea Market, Old Home Days weekend, and our "Sidewalk Café" at the Rhoades' Farm during "Wool Days" were well rewarded with much needed revenue to support the Society's objectives.

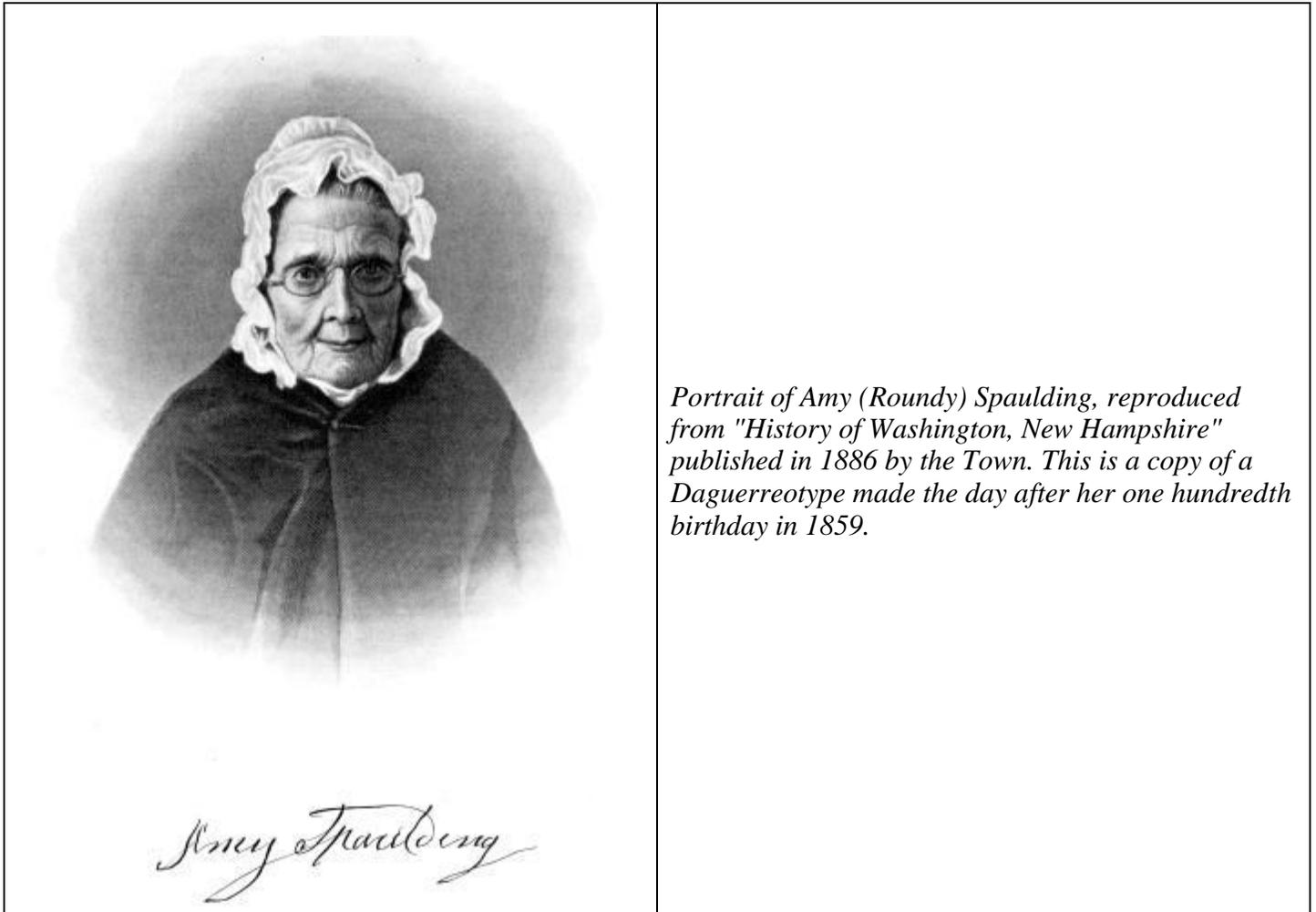
A great time was had by all at the WHS Barn Dance in October. What a great surprise to see such a large turnout! Many thanks to everyone who attended and to those who helped pull it all together. Chief Marshall and the Newport Police Explorer volunteers were greatly appreciated as they stayed out in the very cold weather to direct the huge volume of cars in their search for parking spaces on the narrow Half Moon Pond Road. A special thank-you to the Barn Committee for making this joyful time one to remember.

On behalf of our officers, directors and committee members, best wishes to you and your families for a healthy, joyous and safe Holiday Season.

Respectfully,
Charlene (Charley) Eastman

Vital Statistics

By Tom Talpey



Portrait of Amy (Roundy) Spaulding, reproduced from "History of Washington, New Hampshire" published in 1886 by the Town. This is a copy of a Daguerreotype made the day after her one hundredth birthday in 1859.

Following a suggestion by the Society's Archivist, Gwen Gaskell, one of our charter members, Charlene Cobb, has been compiling a computerized list for the Museum's Archives of the Births, Marriages and Deaths recorded in the Town records. Although the task is not yet completed, there are many interesting stories hidden therein. This is especially true when the two town history books are read in conjunction with Charlene's list.

One of the first marriages reported in the town records was that of Ebenezer Spaulding to Anna (Amy) Roundy. The Old Town History book has an interesting story about this couple. Ebenezer moved to Washington about the year 1772. He was a soldier in the Revolution, and was at the battles of Bunker Hill and Ticonderoga. On Jan. 16th, 1777, after his discharge, he married Amy Roundy who was 17 years old at the time. She had been born in Windham, CT, the daughter of Samuel Roundy, and had moved to Lempster with her family when she was twelve years of age. The Old History Book states that she rode the whole way on horseback, carrying her three-year-old sister before her on the same horse, laden also with a brass kettle and a bag of provisions. The other members of the family, together with all their household effects, were transported in an ox cart. They constructed a log house, with a dirt floor and a bark roof, using the side of a huge rock as the fireplace. The Old Town History book relates that the Roundy family "cleared their land of trees and sowed flax, from which they made much of their own clothing. Their food consisted largely of bean porridge and other plain but wholesome

food. Wild animals were numerous, including bears and wolves, and the sleep of the inmates of the rude cabin was often disturbed by the howling of the wolves as they prowled around the house in search of food."

According to Charlene's tabulation, Amy was 18 when she had her first child, Naomi, born on Nov. 4th, 1777, in what was then called Washington. (Some time after 1790, due to the settlement of a boundary dispute between Lempster and Washington, the Spaulding property was placed under the jurisdiction of Lempster, so some records have the family as living in Lempster.) Naomi was one of three girls born to the family, amongst a host of seven boys, the last one being Reuben, born on May 24, 1800. (That makes ten children!) One of their daughters died in childhood and Naomi and her remaining sister, although both married, never had children. All of the brothers, however, lived well into adulthood, married and had families of their own.

In 1807, Ebenezer and his family moved to East Washington, where he died the following year, leaving his wife as a 47-year-old widow, who together with her sons must have taken care of the farm. Amy spent the rest of her life in East Washington and died on June 8, 1859, two months and ten days after her hundredth birthday. "Her centennial birthday was publicly celebrated in the Baptist Church at East Washington, where a large number of her neighbors, relations and friends gathered to pay their tributes of respect and love. An eloquent address was delivered by her grandson, Rev. Willard Spaulding, and interesting remarks, abounding in reminiscences and amusing anecdotes, were made by Rev. Albert Heald and Rev. David Gage." (Quote from the Old Town History book. Rev. Heald was the current pastor and Rev. Gage had been a former pastor at the East Washington Baptist Church.)

At the time of her death she had 3 surviving children, 21 grandchildren and 30 great grandchildren. One of her grandchildren, Clark S. Spaulding, was elected Selectman three times and lived on the East Washington Road for many years, until his death in 1909. The Honorable Peter J. Spaulding, a present member of the Governor's Executive Council, is a direct descendent of Ebenezer and Amy.

Recent News from the Town

The Town House was painted this summer, as it has been done every few years since its construction in 1791. This year Federal regulations required that it be done with lead free paint. It required 35 gallons at \$24 per gallon. While researching the Town archives for the history of the Round Window we ran across invoices for the repainting which was done in the summer of 1896, somewhat over 100 years ago. Not surprisingly it also required 35 gallons back then. But the cost was only \$1.50 per gallon, which perhaps does seem surprising, until one considers the reality of inflation. The paint was bought from the H.J. & E.C. Gage general store in Hillsborough for a total of \$52.50 plus \$1.18 for shipping, by horse and wagon, of course.

Our Yankee Barn

By Richard Crane

This has been a very busy year at the Barn and much has been accomplished.

In the cold of late winter the clutter of years past was put into categories and items were saved that might be useful at a later time. Much of the oil-soaked fire hose, which covered the main floor, was removed with crowbars, axes and whatever worked and it was then disposed of in the proper fashion. In the basement the old wood floor was removed, exposing some 3 to 4 feet of rotten manure and big stones, which we believe had served as the foundation for an earlier, smaller building that had occupied the same site.

After an extensive search for a contractor to do the leveling of the barn, replacement of the joists and roadside sill and generally stabilize the structure, three proposals were obtained and on February 27, 2004, Richard M. Thompson (Sunrise Woodworks) of Cornish, NH, was selected and approved by the Board of Directors.

As soon as weather permitted, the east side wall of the basement was removed, the nails pulled out from the boards by Peter Pekkala, grandson of Jim & Gwen Gaskell, who was here from Pennsylvania on vacation. The boards were then stored for later return to their original use.

An excavator was rented for a week and a sub-surface drain about ten feet deep was placed along the front of the barn to keep water from coming through the headwall and into the basement. Next the excavator and a bucket tractor were used to remove and lower the basement floor to natural ground level. Then a layer of bank run gravel was put in, making for a much better surface to work on than the slippery, rotten manure and rocks. The machinery, skillfully maneuvered by Phil Barker, backed up by Jim Gaskell and other volunteers, laid up a dry stonewall foundation along the entire side of the east wall. The wall now braces the headwall and supports the big horizontal sills.

In June the contractor and his crew arrived with a truckload of jacks, chain-falls, a jackhammer, 16" beam saw, etc. The barn was found to be some 12" out of level, and some leaning beams were methodically put plum. New vertical posts were installed, new horizontal beams applied where rot had taken place and some spans were double beamed. The roof rafters, some of them 7" from being vertical, were pulled back by pulleys, cable, and yes, a large truck. The 20-foot 2x10" plank supports were fastened on a 45-degree angle to the underside of the rafters with special timber-lock screws, to keep the rafters in place.



Our President, Charley Eastman, adjusting vacuum cleaner cord during clean-up phase in preparation for the Barn Dance.

A jackhammer was used to remove the cement and rotten beams at the front entrance to the barn. New sills were installed and a rubber mat used to cover the joints was extended a distance away from the sill to deflect moisture. This technique was used anywhere that wood met the stone foundation. Five windows were installed on the east basement wall by Phil Barker and Rocky Cavender and the east wall was then boarded in. The windows are designed to provide easy opening for ventilation.

It was no small task to replace the main level floor. First, new floor joists were installed, then 1/2" boards were laid across them and, finally, 2" thick pine planks laid at right angles. The final floor is not fastened down but just laid in place, to allow for shrinkage and expansion, as all the wood is still green. As a final touch, a wooden bench was installed all along the inside of the walls, again using 2" thick pine planks.

While working at the barn it was soon evident that the roof leaked, so the contractor was called back and a new metal roof was put on over the old shingled roof. This was done to preserve the appearance of the underside, so that it still looks as it always has.

A lot of other things have been done, too numerous to mention-like Gwen Gaskell providing fresh coffee and home-made doughnuts, sweeping and vacuuming, and yes, helping to lift the heavy beams and the thick pine floor planks.



Workmen in fall -- even without color the beauty is evident.

We thank all the volunteers-everyone who donated money, labor and other support. We will not name the many people who contributed for fear of omitting someone. But we were surprised and pleased to find that Peck Sand & Gravel of Lempster decided not to charge us for all the sand, gravel and rock which was used-a not inconsiderable donation, which saved the Society over \$1100. And as to the lumber, not a stick or window had to be purchased, even though over 10,000 board feet were used. Phil Barker donated all the logs and volunteers helped him saw them at his mill.

Our goal for next year is to replace the clapboard where needed and to paint. It is our hope and wish that we will receive enough through fund raising projects and donations to buy the clapboards and stain to finish the job. We feel we can do the lower part of the building ourselves and will need to hire someone only for the highest parts. We intend to put the barn in such good condition that it will last another 150 years, thus doubling its life span. In the meantime, it can serve for many purposes as a non-profit facility in the Washington community.

In addition to the Barn Dance pictured below, a huge fundraising Barn Sale was held on November 13th and 14th. Another will be held in the Spring.



Gwen Gaskell sawing big log with Richard Crane's assistance



Basement excavation underway, showing old support beams and natural rock foundations



Gwen Gaskell directing log sawing operation with Phil Barker and Richard Crane, using Phil's portable sawmill.



Contractor workmen installing the first section of new roof - Note safety ropes



Phil Barker & Jim Gaskell hoisting support beam into place in basement



Richard Crane directing excavation operations from a safe place in the basement



Jim Gaskell's grandson, Peter Pekkala, with Richard Crane holding up rear side of the barn during replacement of beams in basement



Phil Barker operating excavator to dig new deep drainage ditch across front of barn



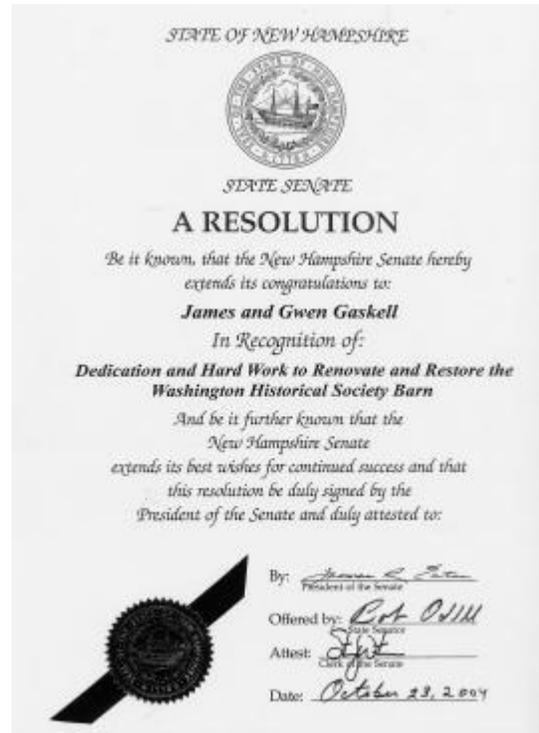
Contractor laying new sill beam across front entrance (beam prepared by Phil Barker with his portable sawmill)



Excavating basement



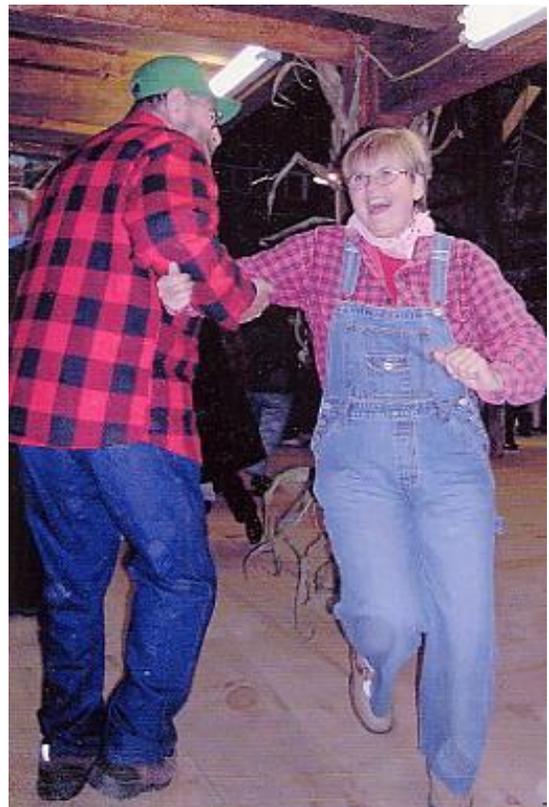
Resolution passed by the NH Senate recognizing the dedicated work of Richard Crane, Phil Barker, and Gwen and Jim Gaskell in preserving the Barn being presented by Senator Bob Odell



Copy of Resolution



Poster advertising the Society's Inaugural Barn Dance celebrating the renovation of the Barn on Half Moon Pond Road



Pat Liotta enjoying a swing with Paul Barrett (from Goshen)



*View from the loft of the dancing crowd at the
Opening Barn Dance Celebration*



*Caller Carolyn Parrott and Fiddler Brad Dorsey as
the Parrott-Dorsey Pick-up Band at the Historical
Society's Inaugural Barn Dance*



*Nora Pasioka teaching Jim Gaskell how to tap his left
foot*



Jim Gaskell chatting with Richard Crane on the spectators' bench at the Barn Dance



Gwen Gaskell and Larry Pool promenading the Phil Barker and partner in the background - Note Barn Quilt to be raffled hanging on the wall in the background to the right of Larry



Phil Barker and Heather Cavender among the dancers



Barbara & Larry Gaskell in a happy moment at the Barn Dance



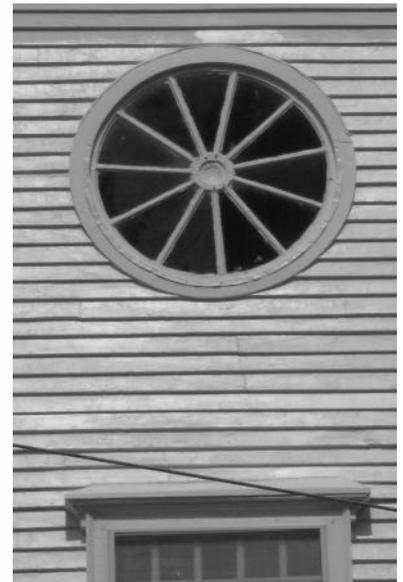
Jonas Hofstetter & Ali Leizure - "Swing your partner"

Round Window in the Town House

By Tom Talpey



Two photos of the Round Window at the top of the east end of the Washington Town House. One is an enlargement of an old photo taken sometime before 1896, when the window had 31 panes. The other photo was taken recently and shows only 11 panes with a solid wooden center. Note a couple of broken panes in the older window.



Soon after moving to Washington I noticed that the round window in the wall of the east end of the Town Hall has ELEVEN glass panes. This seemed like an oddity, so I began to inquire if anyone knew WHY it had such an odd number (not intended to be a pun) of panes. There is a brief discussion of it in the booklet "...A Sacred Deposit" written by Ronald Jager and Sally Krone and published in 1989 for The Washington Meetinghouse

Bicentennial Old Home Day Committee. The original round window had 31 panes, as can be seen in the accompanying enlargement of a portion of an old photograph. But no one could explain the significance or the reason for the replacement window having only eleven panes. So this summer I determined to look into the matter a bit further.

With the assistance of Grace Jager, the Town Archivist, and some hints from the booklet "*...A Sacred Deposit*" I was able to determine when and who made the window. It was constructed in 1896 by John L. Safford, who billed the town \$8 on July 27th of that year for doing so. Mr. Safford was apparently some sort of a custodian of the Town House, as there are numerous bills in the town archives from him for replacing single lights of glass (at 3 cents per pane!), as well as for other repair jobs on the building. He was an accomplished carpenter who also ran a shop near the center of town making caskets. One of his caskets is in the museum collection. I never did discover the reason the design of the window was changed. Perhaps it was an economy move when the original window needed replacement.

There is a hotel guest register from the Lovell House in the museum archives. In the back of it is a calculation by three guests at the hotel of the total area of all the glass panes in the town house windows. They counted 1839 lights of rectangular glass, each measuring 7x9 inches, added to this the 11 pie-shaped lights in the round window, and estimated a total of 810 square feet of glass. It is signed by D. L. Waterman and Alpine McLean of Boston and John T. Wells, all of whom were guests at the hotel at the time and is dated August 24, 1896.

Museum Acquisitions

By Gwen Gaskell

If you visited the museum this summer, or when you visit the barn next summer, you did or will see a woman's sidesaddle, which was given to us with the barn that was donated by the Bruen family. Written on a section of wood shingle is "Mercy Barrett of Mason, (N.H.) great, great grandmother of Zaida Cilley, rode into Washington on this saddle in 1807."

Inquiry of the local Cilley men did not turn up any information that was passed down through the generations, so we have to go to the history book. Mercy Barrett was married to Mark Safford of Washington on Jan. 30, 1807. It does not tell us whether she rode into town before or after her marriage, but it seems to us that a ride on horseback for about 40 miles would be a daunting trip if made in the winter! Mercy was born in 1780, which made her 26 at the time of her marriage. Mercy and Mark had eight children all born in Washington, 5 boys and 3 girls, between the years 1808 and 1824, all of whom lived into adult hood. Mercy lived to be 87 and is buried next to her husband and some of her children in the New Cemetery near the center of town. Several of our members are Safford relatives, living in New England and across the country. Two of her direct descendants live in Washington and one of them, Richard Cilley, is a member of our Historical Society. Mercy would have been his great, great, great grandmother.

Many other interesting items have been given to us this year and they will be on display next summer but I would like to tell you that we have been the grateful recipients of a large collection of old kitchen implements as well as old food tins and medicine bottles. The list continues with a bull rake, 2 plows, saws, saw sets, and spoke or spindle sharpeners, an old wooden snow scoop, scales and numerous other things that I'm sure you will find interesting in the coming season.