

Washington Historical Society Newsletter

SPRING 2005 EDITION

President's Message



Being involved with the Washington Historical Society has been a great opportunity for me. As I learn more about the organization and my new responsibilities, I gain great respect for all of our past and present Officers and Board members. There is still much to be learned. I thank everyone for the time, patience and understanding you have given to me during this educational period.

The Museum Committee received a generous gift of old artifacts (read more about this in the newsletter). What fun it was to document these wonderful items with Gwen Gaskell. The time spent certainly helped with “getting through” the winter blues with quite a lot of laughter trying to determine what some of the items were used for. Don't forget to drop by the Museum this summer to enjoy the new displays while walking down memory lane.

Is your membership in the Washington Historical Society current? If not, please take a moment now to fill out the enclosed form and send it to us. Our fiscal year runs August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2005. Your membership is important to us and we thank you for your continued support.

Last season brought in some outstanding speakers that drew record attendance. The Potluck Suppers have grown into a major monthly social event. Please remember to mark the dates on your calendars – bring some friends along for a great time. Please contact Frank Musmanno if you have any suggestions for future topics and speakers.

The Society is blessed with an active and supportive membership. The officers of the Society and myself extend our sincere gratitude to all of you who have worked so diligently on behalf of our organization.

Sincerely,

Charlene (Charley) Eastman

President, Washington Historical Society

CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS BURIED IN WASHINGTON, N.H.

Contributed by Phyllis Longver

Phyllis Longver in Webster, NH, who is the Camp Historian of J. S. Durgin Camp #7 of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, has embarked on the seemingly endless task of compiling a list of the burial places of all New Hampshire Civil War Veterans. In response to a request and after what must have been considerable work, she has kindly sent us a list of 86 men from Washington and East Washington who went off to the war, including several re-enlistments and 34 “substitutes” who were recruited (and paid) to represent the Town. This list will be available at the Museum for anyone who might wish to refer to it. For most of the names the burial place is unknown. If you know of any additions or corrections, please let us know.

According to Mrs. Longver's records, plus what we have been able to glean from Town records, there are 20 Civil War Soldiers buried (or with memorial stones erected) in Washington, 10 in the East Washington cemetery and 10 in the two cemeteries near the center of town. They are as follows:

East Washington	Washington Center
CARR, George W. (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1905, Washington, NH	CHAPMAN, Henry N. (8th Inf.-A) b. Sanbornton, NH—d. 1917, Newport, NH
CRAIN, George C. (8th Inf.-A) b. Wilmot, NH—d. 1915, Goffstown, NH	HALL, William W. (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1935, Marlow, NH
CRAIN, Henry (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1863, Butte-a-La-Rose, LA	JAQUITH, Arthur H. (1st NH HA-L) b. Washington, NH—d. 1925, Washington, NH
FLETCHER, Francis P. (10th Inf.-H) b. Washington, NH—d. 1901, Washington, NH	MELLEN, George L. (10th Inf.-H) b. Washington, NH—d. 1863, Washington, DC
HOYT, Hiram I. (10th Inf.-H) b. Washington, NH—d. 1901, Washington, NH	MELLEN, James Langdon (2nd Inf.-G) b. Washington, NH—d. 1863, Washington, DC
JONES, George S. (14th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1930, E. Washington, NH	MILLEN, John C. (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1896, Washington, NH
MONROE, Samuel D. (1st US SS-E) b. Washington, NH—d. 1863, Kelly's Ford, VA	STOWELL, Freeman S. (14th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1919
RITTER, Albion L (7th Inf.-A) b. Stratford, VT	WILKINS, Hamilton (8th Inf.-A) b. Peterborough, NH—d. 1862, Carrollton, LA
SEVERANCE, Hezekiah M. (9th Inf.-G) b. Lempster, NH—d. 1895, Washington, NH	SEVERANCE, Hezekiah M. (9th Inf.-G) b. Peterborough, NH—d. 1887, Washington, NH
SEVERANCE, Edward W. (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1927, E. Washington, NH	WILSON, Lucius H. (16th Inf.-I) b. Washington, NH—d. 1869, Lowell, MA

HENRY CRAIN IN THE CIVIL WAR

Contributed by Stephen Crain

Steve Crain, one of our enthusiastic members who lives in Windham, Maine, has made a hobby of collecting information about Washington and frequently visits here, has sent us this poignant account about two of his ancestors from Washington who were soldiers in the Civil War:

“I am directly descended from Henry Crain (ne: Crane), who was born in Washington, NH in 1818, and is a Civil War veteran. He was my great-great-grandfather. Although the family name had always been Crane, and indeed, Henry was born Crane, he made the conscious decision, prior to enlisting in the 16th Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers, to change the spelling of his family name to Crain; we do not know why. That spelling has continued, however, ever since. Henry lived as a farmer, and built a home for his family on the Half Moon

Pond Road, on the northwest slope of Lovell Mountain, well above where Ron & Grace Jager now live. Although that area is presently quite remote, and uncivilized (now part of the Max Israel Tract), my daughter and I were fortunate enough to locate the old cellar hole a few years ago. We have spent many moving hours there, contemplating his life, and recovering a few modest artifacts and mementos. Henry enlisted in the 16th Regiment, Company I, when he was 44 years of age, quite old to be enlisting in the Army. He had been married for several years by that time, and had established a family, with six children. The eldest son, George Carlton Crain, had enlisted in the 8th Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteers several months prior to his father's enlistment. We can only imagine his wife Hannah's reaction to the news that Henry had decided to go to war. He may well have been enticed by the enlistment bonuses that were being paid to enlistees, amounting to several hundred dollars at that time - more money, surely, than a subsistence farmer from the hills of New Hampshire had ever seen. He can almost be heard to rationalize to his wife and family that he would only be gone for a few months (it was, after all, a "9-month Regiment"), as surely the North could put down the southern rebellion in just a few short months.

I have spent considerable time studying Henry's unfortunate war experience, and have located, purchased and read several times the Regimental History of the Sixteenth Regiment. Regrettably, Henry was never to see his beloved New Hampshire home and family again, as he, along with over 700 of his comrades from the 16th Regiment, died a tragic death in the swamps of Louisiana, a victim of malaria. Although Henry is commemorated with a marker stone in the East Washington cemetery, alongside his wife and daughter, I am certain that his humble bones remain deep in the swamps of Butte-a-la-Rose, Louisiana, where he took his last breath. Communication, and the ability to return his mortal remains to his loving family in the hills of New Hampshire, were not what they are today. You can find his gravestone just inside the main gate (opening in the stone wall) in the cemetery alongside the East Washington Baptist Church. As you enter straight in from the parking lot, his stone is the first on the left, immediately alongside the path, under the shade of a large oak tree. His wife Hannah is to his right, and his little daughter Hattie Rosella is to his left. Tragically, little Hattie Rosella died, at the tender age of just four years, presumably of measles, in March of 1863, just two months before her father succumbed to malaria. Considering the times, Henry would have been completely unaware of his daughter's death so many miles away. Henry died May 24, 1863, in the desolate swamps of Butte a la Rose. He could not have known that just four days later, on May 28, a rescue mission was launched by boat, to rescue the unfortunate survivors of the 16th Regiment. The rescuers left New Orleans on May 28th, arrived at Butte a la Rose on the 29th, loaded the roughly 150 survivors on the boats, headed back to New Orleans on the 30th, and arrived back at New Orleans on the 31st. We have no way of knowing just what might have been going through Henry's mind, and the minds of his stricken comrades in arms, but given the strength and magnitude of the will to live, wouldn't it be reasonable to believe that, had Henry known that help was just a few days away, might he not have held on just a few days longer, with the prospect of seeing his family once again?

The survivors of the 16th Regiment were returned to New Orleans, where they spent only a very few days at a hospital facility before they were reassigned. Their orders were to defend an abandoned fort in the Mississippi, considered not strategic to the Union Army, but they didn't want it to fall into the hands of the Confederates. Those poor, broken and sickly remnants of the 16th NH valiantly defended the fort until a Union ship approached, and several men disembarked. The men of the 16th were relieved to see reinforcements arrive, and were overjoyed to learn that those men were from the 8th Regiment, NH Volunteers. One of those men from the 8th regiment was George Carlton Crain, who, upon learning that the defenders of the fort were from the 16th NH, must certainly have asked of the whereabouts of his father. Imagine learning, for the first time, of the terrible fate his father had suffered. George C. Crain returned to Washington after the war, and lived in East Washington for many years thereafter. His youngest brother, Jason, was my great-grandfather, who later moved to nearby Claremont, where he found work and started a family. Jason's only son, Orvis L. Crain, was my grandfather, and although he died in 1956, I remember him fondly. I have accumulated much detailed information on Henry Crain, particularly during the brief period of his enlistment during the Civil War, and

would be pleased, indeed proud, to share it with anyone. Henry is one of the twelve sons of Washington memorialized on the Soldier's Monument in front of the Town House, although the Town apparently was unaware that he had made the very deliberate name change to Crain, as he is forever recorded as "Henry Crane" on that monument. You will find that he, and all of his family, are duly recorded as "Crain" on their gravestones at the East Washington cemetery."

CIVIL WAR ENLISTMENT BONUSES

According to the *History of Washington, 1768-1886*, near the beginning of the war the town voted to pay a bounty of \$100 to any man who enlisted as a volunteer. A year later this was increased to \$300, "until our present quota is filled" and authorized the selectmen to borrow money to meet this purpose. Evidently as the war progressed it became harder to entice volunteers or find substitutes for in the late summer of 1864, by a vote of 46 to 45, the town increased the bounty to \$1000. However, the motion to raise the money to pay for this was defeated 63 to 64. There must have been a heated discussion about this for, in an interesting twist, this was followed by a motion, which passed after several amendments, to make the bounty \$999.99, which was then accepted! But some of the townspeople immediately had second thoughts about the matter, for the Town History states that a week later a special town meeting was called at which the motion was adopted by a vote of 78 to 6, setting the bounties at \$300 for one year's enlistment and \$500 for three years', with an amendment that "all prior votes for paying bounties by the town be abrogated." Since the war came to an end about six months later, the question of bounties soon evaporated.

THE CIVIL WAR MONUMENT

Photos by Tom Talpey

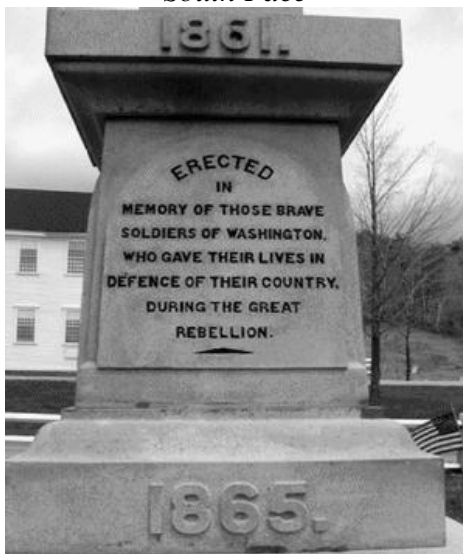


*The Civil War Monument on the Washington Common
View from the southeast
(click on photo to enlarge)*

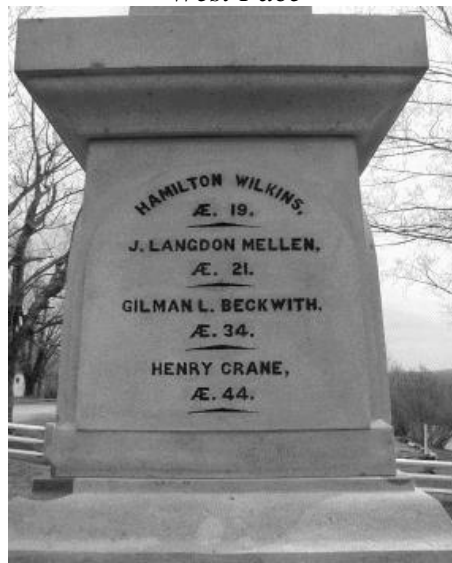
Shortly after the close of the war a movement started in town to erect a monument memorializing those men from Washington who had given their lives in the conflict. As related in the *History of Washington, 1768-1886*, raising money by fairs, “voluntary contributions and the generous assistance of former residents and natives” the monument was dedicated on Sept. 13, 1867, at a grand festival attended by Gov. Harriman (1867-69), Ex-Gov. Smyth (1865-67) and a host of citizens. “It was one of the red-letter days of the town.” The monument bears the names of twelve men from Washington who did not return from the war and is the first such monument to be erected in the State of New Hampshire.

Four of these men, Henry Crane/Crain, J. Langdon Mellen, Samuel D. Monroe and Hamilton Wilkins, are also commemorated by private gravestones in cemeteries in town and are included in Phyllis Longver's list earlier in this newsletter.

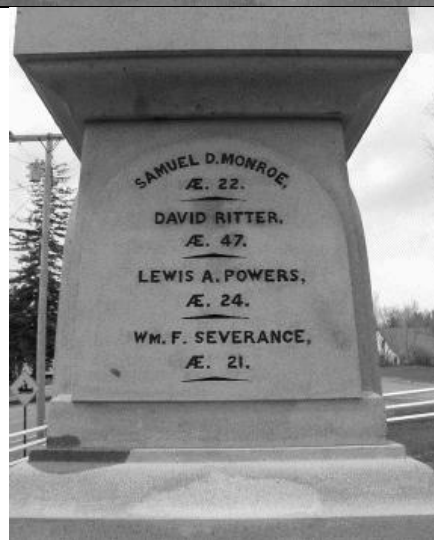
South Face



West Face



North Face



East Face

Inscriptions on the Civil War Monument

CIVIL WAR EXCERPTS FROM THE TOWN HISTORY

By Tom Talpey

There are several chapters in the *History of Washington, 1768-1886* which detail the experiences and fate of some of the soldiers who served as enlisted men from Washington. Although it is not explicitly stated, I believe these chapters were compiled by Hiram I. Hoyt, a member of the "Washington Squad" as it was called. The preface mentions Col. Dana W. King of Nashua as an author of part of the sketch of the 8th Regiment, and material pertaining to the 14th Regiment was contributed by Freeman S. Stowell, a citizen of the town. These chapters make fascinating and sometimes rather exciting reading for a history book. The following excerpts were condensed from them.

The first man to enlist from Washington was James Langdon Mellen, who enlisted in the 2nd NH Volunteers on June 5, 1861, answering the first call from President Lincoln for volunteers. He fought in at least seven engagements, from Bull Run to Fredericksburg, before contracting typhoid fever and eventually dying in a hospital in Washington, DC. on Jan. 19, 1863. His courage and spirit are much to be admired. His name is engraved on the Civil War Monument in the center of Town, as one of the 12 soldiers from Washington who did not return from the conflict. There is also a gravestone erected in his memory in the Old Cemetery near the center of town.

Also among those 12 early volunteers in the 2nd NH regiment was Henry L. Jones, the first Washington man to die in the war. He had enlisted with J. Langdon Mellen but died of disease at Hilltop, Maryland, on Nov. 14, 1861, at 19 years of age, just over 5 months after he had enlisted.

The youngest to give his life in the conflict was Hamilton Wilkins, of the 8th NH Volunteers, the only son of Col. Judson Wilkins. Hamilton died at Carrollton, LA, again from disease, just short of his 19th birthday. He was buried in the camp cemetery, but afterwards "his remains, as probably also those of [Henry J.] Mellen, have since been exhumed and reinterred in a national cemetery at Chalmette, eight miles below New Orleans, LA," according to the Town History book.

Corporal Henry J. Mellen, also of the 8th NH Volunteers, lost his life during a charge on the enemy's line at the battle of Georgia Landing, Labadieville, LA, on Oct. 26, 1862. According to the author of these chapters in the Town History book, Mellen had a premonition the night before the battle that he would be the first to die. He was actually the second, his Captain having been killed earlier in the battle. He was buried (temporarily) near an adjacent plantation house.

Mark G. Wilson, in the same regiment as Wilkins and Mellen but surviving the War, had a more varied tour of duty than probably any other soldier from Washington. He was promoted out of his original regiment, the 8th NH Volunteers, to be commissioned as a first lieutenant in the 99th USCT, a famous regiment of colored engineers. As related in the Town History book, his squad became isolated and because he was the only white man in the party he was singled out as the leader by enemy sharpshooters. Four bullets went through his clothing, but Lt. Wilson escaped without a scratch. He was later captured and sent to the infamous Andersonville prison, one of the worst, if not THE worst, prison camp in the south. After a stay of one month, the war being nearly over, 3300 prisoners from the camp were marched out for exchange, heading for Jacksonville, FL. Two weeks into the march, news of the surrender of Lee and the assassination of Lincoln reached the officers in command and the prisoners were just abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Reaching Jacksonville in a group of starved and fatigued men, Wilson was put on a ship to Annapolis and eventually mustered out. After the War he married and lived in Nashua, where he had a son in 1869. He died in 1887, at the age of 49, and according to Mrs. Longver's list, is buried in Saginaw, MI.

There is a brief comment in chapter 27 of the 1886 Town History concerning Moses D. Proctor of the 10th Infantry Regiment who was wounded in action near Richmond, and died on May 17, 1864 in Hampton, VA. The history book describes him as "a brave and true soldier" saying that Washington lost "an upright and respected townsman, who enlisted from strong convictions of duty and sealed his devotion to his country with his life." Also from the same regiment Samuel T. Farnsworth was killed near Richmond on Dec. 26, 1864. "He was a faithful, vigilant soldier, a kind and obliging tent mate, and it may well be said that he was completely worn out, having taken part in almost every march and action of the regiment from its formation until his death." Both of these men's names are engraved on the Civil War Monument in the center of town. In the final advance on Richmond, it is said that "private George L. Mellen of Washington was the first to place his hand upon the guns of the capitulated fortress." Mellen died years later, in 1919, and is buried in the New Cemetery near the center of town.

Two of the six Washington members of the 14th Regiment of NH Volunteers are buried in Washington cemeteries. Freeman S. Stowell (written as Silas F. Freeman in the genealogy section of the book) returned to spend many years at home on his farm north of Ashuelot Pond. He died in 1919 and is buried in the New Cemetery near the center of town. He has written a detailed account of his service, which is printed in chapter 28 of the History of Washington, NH, 1768-1886. He received the call for duty one morning as he was working in his field. He relates that he "worked till noon, went to the house, ate my dinner, bade adieu to my family, and that afternoon walked to Claremont (a distance of 24 miles). Father wanted to carry me [presumably with a horse and buggy] but I told him if I could not walk that distance I was not fit for a soldier."

George S. Jones also returned to his farm in E. Washington after the war, died in 1930 at the age of 83 and is buried in the E. Washington cemetery. He had enlisted at the age of 15 and was in all the battles that the 14th Regiment fought. In a letter to the compilers of the Town History he relates: "I had bullets put through my clothing, and my haversack shot off, but never received a wound."

The 16th Regiment of NH Volunteers had 14 members from Washington. Two of these men, Henry Crane/Crain and Gilman Beckwith, died in the conflict and are memorialized on our Civil War Monument. The burial place of Gilman Beckwith is not known. The other, Henry Crain, is the subject of a touching essay by Steve Crain which also appears in this newsletter. There is a gravestone in his memory in the E. Washington cemetery.

Samuel D. Monroe, a Sharpshooter whose name appears on the Civil War Monument, was killed in 1863 at Kelly's Ford, VA, during the war, but his body now rests in a grave in the E. Washington cemetery. His remains were retrieved under a flag of truce by his comrades from behind Confederate lines and sent back to Washington, "for a Christian burial." "A platoon of returned soldiers, under command of Lieutenant [Judson] Wilkins of the 16th Regiment, performed the usual martial ceremonies at the grave."

Our Yankee Barn

By Richard Crane

The barn committee has gotten together informally several times this winter and set the following goals for 2005.

1. Finish the stonework and grading at the basement level.
2. Put a door on the back where we put up temporary weather block for the winter.
3. Put new clapboards and trim on the south wall, framing in the windows at the same time.
4. Replacing the worn-out clapboards on the north side of the barn up as high as necessary.
5. Stain the front, south and north sides of the barn.

6. Hold barn sales and staining bees.
7. Get display areas ready in the barn and assist in the displays.
8. Be available to welcome the public to see our newly renovated barn.

We looked into the possibility of sawing our own clapboards but this didn't appear practical. We visited several lumber outlets and priced clapboards. Sources varied very little in price and would require a lot of fund raising.

Phil Barker located a retired builder who had a large inventory of clapboards. Upon learning of our project he offered to sell them all to us at a most reasonable price. These are the same kind of clapboards that are on the barn now. There appear to be enough clapboards to do the entire barn including the back side. We decided to go this route. Once the clapboards arrive in town and the weatherman cooperates we will be ready to start priming and staining them.

We plan to prime the clapboards on all sides before putting them on, so get out your paint brush and clothes and let us know if you will be available to lend a helping hand. It will be greatly appreciated and hopefully we can make it fun. Many hands make light work and we may be lucky enough to enjoy a special coffee break.

The Museum

By Gwen Gaskell

Most of you know that the display at the museum is different each season so you really need to visit it each season to see what is out on display and learn more about our town.

Last summer we featured many people of Washington's past with pictures and information. We decided that all of this information should not just be put away in a file so it has been carefully put into Mylar pages in a notebook and will remain available for visitors to enjoy.

The notebooks of "Nellie's Diary" will also remain available with information and pictures which Tom has found in the Hillsboro collection. We have not yet found a picture with "proof positive" but we have a few pictures and we feel that there is likeness enough at the different ages for them to be the same immediate family. We do have a picture of Nellie's parents, George and Maria Newman that Tom located with their names on it. The search for Nellie's sister Emma continues--- Did she marry? Children? Where did she live and die? We are sure we will eventually find the answers.

Last fall we were thrilled to be given a large collection of old kitchen artifacts and they will be displayed this summer in the barn in our "Old Fashioned Kitchen" The collection also contained a marvelous assortment of old medicine bottles, tins and artifacts. It is these items along with the collection that we already have in our archives that we will make our main display with for this season. Some of the labels are most interesting to read. We will enlarge them or print larger versions so they can be enjoyed. Some of the bottles are very pretty in color as well as interesting shapes.

There are also some surprises for the new acquisition case, including a set of four old Daguerreotypes of the French family (lived in what is now the Crane farm on Rt. 31) purchased over the internet with the help of contributions from three of our members.

SCHOOLGIRL'S TALE

Phebe Ramsey Thurston, one of our readers from Connecticut, attended the school in the center of town in the late 1930's and has sent us this reminiscence:

I remember being out to recess in the first grade. We were left out to play some time longer than the other kids. A girl from East Washington convinced me that we should try to get up into the Belfry of the Town Hall. So we climbed up those rickety open stairs and when we got up there we were too scared to come back down! At lunchtime they couldn't find us and started calling for us. Finally we decided if we were to get down we'd have to answer. Well, needless to say I got reprimanded at school, then by my Uncle Frank Crane and last and the worst by my parents! I decided I'd never go into that building again. However, when I attended the Old Home Day in 1976, I did go into the Town Hall again, but not to the Bell Tower!

Tales from the Past

By Richard Crane

Portrait of a Washington Native



Walter Chamberlain (b. 1899, d. 1975) was a true Washington Native, born in East Washington and attending the East Washington School with the Crane and Fletcher children. Wally, as he was called by most, lived the land, hunting-fishing-trapping and working on the road crew as a dynamite man.

He made maple syrup in the spring and worked for N.S. & R.A. Crane in the summers haying, grinding scythe's blades, hand mowing, etc. with his heavy beach coat on "to keep the heat out."

Wally was a great gardener and raising potatoes was his passion. At harvest time someone wanted to buy a peck of potatoes. He refused the request saying, "I won't cut one of my potatoes in half for anyone." [He grew BIG potatoes but sometimes his stories were bigger.]

Later in life Wally became a salesman for the Vermont Evaporator Company and rode around New Hampshire in his Model A Coupe, selling evaporators and maple syrup supplies. He was a good salesman at selling evaporators, "specially the small 2' X 4's" and local people got to calling him "the maple king". He also bought bulk syrup for the company he worked for, saying "They would buy anything maple that one could pound through the bunghole in the barrel."

Wally's writing equaled that of a doctor's, so he bought himself a typewriter and taught himself how to use it. This solved the problem except he often said that the machine he got "couldn't spell worth a damn."

Wally hunted using a double barrel [Damascus] Ithaca shot gun. One time when he shot at a deer, he said "it sounded like he had thrown a lot of old dishpans down a bank". The buckshot had blown up the right barrel for some 4 to 5 inches. He took the old gun home, whittled out a pine plug, drove it into the right breach and hunted with "Old Ithaca" the rest of his life.

Wally will always be remembered by anyone who met him!!!

We hope that "Tales from the Past" will become a regular newsletter feature.—ed.

PAUPERISM

Grace Jager spotted the following excerpt from the Selectmen's budget report in the Town Clerk's Records for 1821, following an expense item of \$300 for the support of paupers. It may have a connection with the article on [Taverns](#) in our Fall 2002 issue:

"We wish to call the attention of the Town to the subject of pauperism. It would be very desirable to devise means to lessen the expensed of paupers and to prevent the too frequent occurrence of pauperism. In our opinion a strict and impartial execution of the laws regulating licensed houses would have a tendency to lessen pauper expenses and have a beneficial effect on society at large, as much of the evil appears to originate from excessive tipping at stores and licensed houses. If every one who wishes for the good of society should discountenance that pernicious practivce it would do much towards remdedying an evil which threatens the destruction of individuals, families and society."

744th Company Returns



Photo by Jim Gaskell
(click on photo to enlarge)

The 744th Transportation Co. of the Army NH National Guard returned from Iraq on Feb. 27, 2005. The Washington Sr. Group wasted no time in showing their appreciation to them by inviting them to lunch on March 10th. Left to Right: SPC Herb Killam with his wife Lori and their daughter Tiffany; Dusty and her husband SGT George Sprague; SFC Kevin Spaulding; SGT Anna Anelli (Hurd); and SGT Ayodele Glodon, who was with the Mountain Division and his wife Diana.