

Washington Historical Society Newsletter

FALL/WINTER 2013 EDITION

In This Issue

Cider Makin'
page 2

•

Boys, Bicycles &
a Backhouse
page 3

•

Capt. Samuel Jones' Leg
page 4

•

Items for Sale
page 6

•

Confession
page 7

•

Thomas Jefferson &
Maple Syrup
pages 8 - 10

•

Membership Form
page 11

Message from Your President:

I would say that we had a good, but mediocre year.

We had good food for our potluck suppers and generally good turnouts for meetings and programs.

And we had some excellent programs on a good variety of subjects.

The museum attendance was down this year overall. The visit by the school children went very well with a lot of enthusiasm and good questions.

My thanks to all of the steadfast volunteers who hosted the Dist.#5 School, the Museum, and the Barn. Without the dedication of these folks we would not have had the success that we did. The July flea Mkt. and the Roast Beef supper were successful as well and again Thanks to those people for seeing us thru. It has been realized that the Pie Sale and Coffee 'n Donuts. is the best fund raiser we have at the flea mkt. so we are going to discontinue the sale of other items, and thus cut down on the work load.

It does bother me to say that very few of our members, other than the ones that are hosting, set foot in our museums.

We were fortunate to have a few visitors that were not bashful, and could play the piano. And it is reported that they really made our Chickering Square Grand come to life.

It pleases me greatly to see how far we have come in our 30 years of existence. Our collections are extensive for an organization so young. Instead of collecting and storing, we display and educate and that is the secret to success. The Diaries have been an inspiration, and very informative connection to the past. And Clara continues to visit with friends and neighbors.

I look forward to more great programs, demonstrations, and surprises next year.

And I wish you all a Happy and Healthy winter, Happy Holidays, and Merry Christmas.

Phil

Cider Makin'

by Phil Barker

On Saturday, November 2nd a cider pressing demonstration was held at the Barn.

During the week Gwen, Phil, and Gail Revane picked up apples from Gwen & Jim's backyard trees. About 3 bushels I would judge.

The cider press belongs to Phil Barker which he bought from Preston Rolfe in the late '60s. It is about half the size of the Hurd press that the Society owns. During the two hour demonstration about 25 people from Washington and Hillsboro stopped by to witness the event and enjoy some fresh cider and homemade donuts which were provided by Gwen. Most of the visitors took a turn at feeding apples into the hopper. (single handed as the other hand was occupied with a donut) Approximately eight gallons of cider were made, some of it being enjoyed at the potluck supper nine days later.

From the hopper the apples go down through a hand cranked grinder and fall into a slatted tub that has a cloth liner. Once the tub was full it was slid forward to the press and the cloth folded over the top of the pulp, a wooden disk was placed on that and the press screw turned down until it would go no further and the cider drained out into a bucket and was enjoyed by the bystanders or bottled.





Boys, Bicycles, and a Backhouse

By Your President

One nice fall day back in the '50s Mike, David, and I were riding our bicycles on the Lempster road. Preston was out in front of his barn makin' cider with his press.

Curiosity caused us to stop and watch. There was a dipper hanging in the bucket and we were invited to have a drink. It was good, and we continued to watch and drink, for how long I don't recall. But it was long enough. Eventually we three looked at each other, jumped on our bicycles and raced down thru town and rode right into the shed and made a beeline for the "three holer" that was situated therein. We spent some time there and it was a good thing that there were three holes because there wouldn't have been any possibility of waiting in line.

A Recollection shared recently by Jim Crandall

When the Farnsworth property on Millen Pond was still operated as a farm, in the fifties, Waldo Farnsworth had a unique way to hay the steep hill north of the farm on Millen Pond Road. In order to not tip over, he would attach to his tractor an 18'-20' plank with the length on the uphill side. He would then ask local children to sit at the far end of the plank to keep his tractor from rolling over downhill as he proceeded to mow. Another example of Waldo's Yankee ingenuity, he loved to entertain children of all ages!

Capt. Samuel Jones Leg Buried in Washington

as reported by Gwen Gaskell on WNTK 99.7 radio Nov. 1, 2013 after an article in the Claremont Eagle mentioned it in a Halloween article.

Capt. Samuel Jones Jr. was born September 30, 1777 and married Deborah Bradford of Bradford NH. They came to Washington to live and operate a tavern from 1800 through 1803 in the large yellow home south of the library. (Library was not yet built at the time,)

In 1804 while helping move a building his leg became caught when the home slid. On July 7th, his leg had to be amputated, right there at his home on the kitchen table. This was memorable as it was in the days prior to knowledge of anesthesia so liquor was used on the patient. His friends and neighbors waited out on the lawn, feeling many sympathy pains, which they treated with whisky or rum also. When the leg was removed they decided it should have a "proper burial" so it still rests with its marker in the old cemetery in Washington. Samuel was 37 years old at this time.

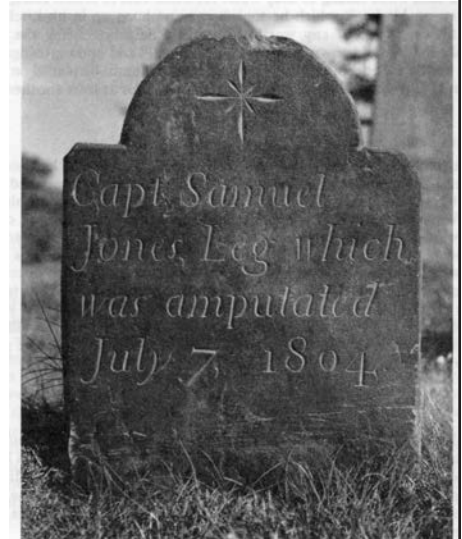
One story is that the house they were moving was a large colonial that had been the home of Archibald White, one of the town's earliest settlers when it was still known as Camden. The home was moved across a hill and down to a lower place where it became a tavern for a while and was known as the Thissell place on Lempster Mt. Rd. It no longer stands. It took 84 yolk of oxen to move the home.

Some say that the body of Samuel Jones rests in Rhode Island but we have not found proof and would be interested in facts. He had two sons, Hosea born in Bradford May 25, 1799 and Harry born in Washington November 27, 1800.

In checking the name of Capt. Jones on the computer I find two listings for him with the correct birth date, one said he died in 1844 in Fly Creek N.Y. and the other gives no date but says he died in New York City so I do believe this and not the Rhode Island theory. I'd love to have a picture of the grave marker of the "rest of him."

Any information can be sent to:

Washington NH Historical Society
PO Box 90
Washington, NH 03280
or
jimgwen@gsinet.net



Stephen T. Whitney

Archivist's Report

A special THANK YOU to Natalie Jurson for calling last spring when she had time on her hands to volunteer some time at the museum archives. I had file boxes of papers that needed to be sorted and recognized it as a job I did not have time to do. Natalie spent hours sorting and organizing, then together we added information and got a lot of work accomplished. In the spring we will try to complete the job by indexing each file box and move on to another challenge.

We still have some of our transcribers working on letters and journals that have been kept over the years. There are other items that keep showing up that would be beneficial to have transcribed if any one would like to be involved in more of this work.

A huge "Thank You" to all those who do help whether it is typing, hosting, cleaning or mowing the lawn or just attending our meeting and programs. You are all appreciated.



New hours for next summer are being mentioned in several places in this newsletter so that we might ALL remember. We have decided to be open at the museum and barn in July and August from 10 to 2 on Saturdays and by advanced appointment on other days or times. This gives us the same hours as the Farmers Market and hopefully will make it more convenient for people to visit all of the places in one trip to town.

Our main display next summer will be dolls and accessories as well as old toys. We have some dolls in our collection and a few members have some they have offered on loan for the season. If you have one, or some, that you would like to have displayed please let me know. We will be setting up the display in April and May so that it will be ready ahead of "Opening" as we possibly have a few tours coming from other societies and early preparation saves the last minute rush.. Of course we can add to the display if necessary for late comers.


Our gift shop is in need of some new items, any hand crafted items are welcome. You give the suggested price with the knowledge that 25% stays with the museum. The winters get long and crafts can help us pass the time and keep us happy so how about an item or two?

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

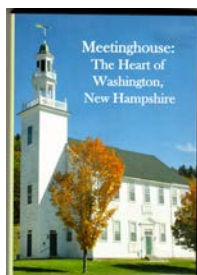
Gwen Gaskell

ITEMS FOR SALE
FEATURING FAVORITE LANDMARKS OF
WASHINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Please order by mail, or call: Elaine Crandall (603) 495-3416, ecrandall@verizon.net
 Tom Talpey (603) 495-3284, ttalpey@gsinet.net
 Gwen Gaskell (603) 495-3231 jimgwen@gsinet.net

ITEM DESCRIPTION	PRICE
Tote Bag. This custom designed tapestry tote bag depicts the much photographed buildings on our Town Common. Tapestry woven in an array of beautiful colors, it measures a generous 17 1/2 inches square. Long 25 inch handles are easy on the shoulders. Lined, with inside pocket.	\$30.00
Pillow. Featuring the East Washington Baptist Church, the pillow is covered in tapestry woven in an array of beautiful colors. It measures a generous 16" x 16" and is offered with hunter green backing.	\$25.00
Puzzle. Our 494-piece, 14" x 19" puzzle is an aerial photograph of the Washington town center by Bill St. Pierre. A limited edition collectible.	\$5.00
Mug. White ceramic mug with sketch of the three steepled buildings in the center of Town. They are 11 ounce and can be used in the microwave and dishwasher. White mugs with black print.	\$5.00
Trivet. 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.	\$15.00
Gustine Hurd Images Postcards Two postcards have been generated, using copies of very old photographs taken in the early 1880s by Gustine Hurd. Also available as single fold notecards packaged in sets of four, including envelopes. Two of each or all four of the same image. Both the postcards and the folded notecards are 5 1/2 x 4 1/4 inches.	50¢ each \$5.00 per set
 Glass Medallion – Suitable for a window hanging, depicting the Town Hall. Adapted from an early 1880s wet plate photograph made by Gustine L. Hurd. These 3 inch diameter medallions are available in Blue or Green.	\$5.00 each

DVD Available



Meetinghouse: The Heart of Washington, New Hampshire
 Few structures say “New England” as eloquently as does a classic eighteenth century Meetinghouse. The small hill town of Washington, New Hampshire, claims such a Meetinghouse. Erected on the 4th of July, 1787, it is still the heart of the town. In this film the town opens its heart to the world. It displays 225 years of affectionate, sometimes contentious, interplay between generations of Washington citizens and the Meetinghouse on the Town Common.

\$20 per DVD Shipping is: \$3 for one DVD plus \$2 for each additional.

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

Confession Is Good for the Soul

By Gwen Gaskell

We know from Clara's Diaries that a large Christmas tree was set up at the Town Hall and a party was held and gifts sometimes exchanged, by those who could afford to do so, usually on Christmas Eve.

When I was a child there was still a tree in the Town Hall, then later the Ladies Auxiliary to the Fire Department provided a gift and Santa paid a visit with a candy cane and an orange for every child in town. I don't recall candlelights in the windows at that time, but by the early 1950s there were lights in the windows from right after Thanksgiving until early January.

Preston Rolfe was the janitor and he drove from his home, across from the fire station, to the town hall every afternoon around 4 o'clock to plug in all the lights and back again before going to bed around 10 to unplug all the lights. This was a ritual for years.

In the early 1970s when Jim and I owned the store he came in one afternoon and said he had just turned the lights on for another season and that he didn't mind turning them on but it was really getting to be a chore to come out at night. I told him I would be glad to do the night duty for him if he would like and he was pleased to accept my offer.

What I haven't told you yet is that for all these years the lights had been RED. I never thought of our town hall as being a "red light district"!

I turned them off each evening and in a few weeks I had purchased enough WHITE lights to replace the red ones. After unplugging the lights one evening I replaced the bulbs and carried a bag of red bulbs home with me.

The next afternoon Preston came into the store with a very bewildered look on his face and asked me to come look out the door. I was glad to oblige and low and behold! The lights were beautiful and WHITE! I told him that was beautiful. "But how did they get white?" asked Preston, I replied "They were red when I turned them off last night." They were, so I did not lie to him and he agreed that it did look nice. So that is my confession and the story of WHITE lights at the town hall. After all Christmas lights and traditions are a part of our town's history and should be recorded.

An evergreen tree was planted between the bandstand and the electric pole which was lit for many years with colored lights and when the tree grew so much it blocked the view of traffic it was taken down. The next season a tree was placed on the bandstand and lights would decorate it for the Christmas season. Automatic timers save people the time of turning lights on or off, which is great as long as the timers are set right and there are no power failures which make it necessary to reset them.

Thomas Jefferson's Experiment with Sugar Maples

By Tom Talpey

New England tradition has it that maple sugar was produced by the American Indians and the technique was passed on long ago to the newer European settlers. I was at Bascom's sugar house in Alstead some years ago and asked the sales person how long they had been in business. In a typically terse New England way, she answered "Forever." Since I had read once that Bascom's began producing syrup in 1853, I didn't pursue the question any further. The 1869 diary of our own Nellie Newman in the museum's collection mentions a trip to Bascom's when she was working in the mill in Alstead, so that makes the answer to my question somewhere between 150 years and Forever. Our own Richard Crane has been making maple sugar at his farm for well over 50 years. Gwen Gaskell and Phil Barker can recall helping with the process from their childhood. Gwen particularly remembers the hard work of washing the sap buckets during the sugar season. In any case the maple sugar industry has been around New Hampshire for a LONG time.

Every spring there are maple sugar "open houses" that are instructive to visit. I've been to at least one where the wife, with a red flushed face, was busily stoking the fire to keep the sap in the evaporator boiling, while the husband was busy checking to see if the batch was done or in between standing around visiting with his buddies. It is truly a family operation and someone has to entertain the visitors. In all fairness, the men have to chop the wood, tap the trees and bring in the tubs of sap or keep the plastic flow lines in shape.

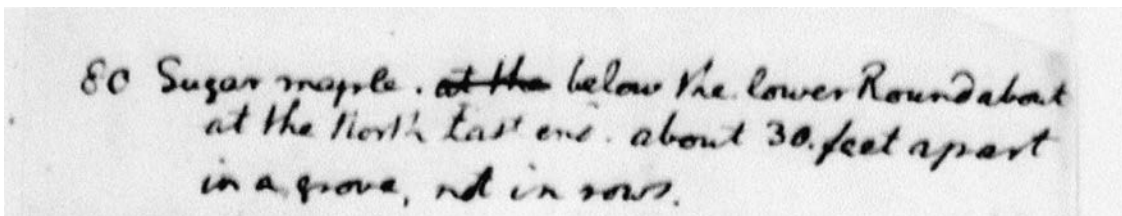
In the Museum barn Phil Barker, Jim Gaskell & Richard Crane have set up a demonstration showing the rudiments of maple syrup making, using an early sap evaporator salvaged from the Washington woods. It has the name "True & Blanchard, Newport, VT" cast into the fire door. Accompanying it is a portion of tree trunk which could pass as a sugar maple, with a tap and bucket hanging from it to illustrate the traditional technique of collecting sap. They have rigged it up with a narrow plastic tube hidden behind the tree, connected to a pail



of water on the floor above and fitted with a valve which controls the dripping of “sap” as it oozes from the tree trunk

Early this year the Shedd Free Library acquired a book called *Founding Gardeners*, by Andrea Wulf. It’s about the gardens of our first four Presidents: Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison. (Bear with me, this is getting to the connection between Jefferson and Maple Syrup!) In late May and early June of 1791, Jefferson and Madison, before they were presidents, made a combined political and private tour of New England making notes on the botany and visiting famous farms along the way.* Leaving New York they traveled in Jefferson’s open phaeton through the Adirondacks to Lake George, averaging a good 30 miles per day. According to Ms. Wulf’s book they had a list of recommended taverns along the way, which Jefferson rated in his log as “good,” “middling,” or “bad.” They then turned east through Bennington and southern Vermont, but unfortunately did not continue on to southern New Hampshire, where they might have visited Bascom’s, if it then existed. Jefferson’s letters during the trip also complain about being besieged by swarms of mosquitoes and “other insects,” which, judging by the month of their visit, must certainly have been black flies! The letters also mention seeing a fragrant wild Azalea which was unfamiliar to Jefferson, which he thought would be a good shrub to grow at Monticello. It turned out to be what in New Hampshire is today called the June Pink. (There are a couple in the Library parking lot garden, as well as along various roadsides in Washington, which bloom in June.)

Jefferson was particularly struck by the maple sugar industry that he discovered at numerous stops along the way. That was soon after the Revolutionary War had ended and the British navy still controlled the shipment of sugar from the West Indies, charging a high tax on its exportation. Jefferson, in his mind, formed the grand plan of circumventing this by expanding the growth of sugar maples in the south and developing a nationwide sugar producing industry. He commented that “It was an ideal crop for small-scale home production because it didn’t require large plantations and slave labor as sugarcane did. Instead the tree’s sap could easily be harvested by the wives and children of American farmers during the weeks when not much work could be done on the fields.” (Thomas Jefferson’s words, not mine!) At a stop at a Long Island nursery near the end of the trip he ordered a number of sugar maple trees (not just some but “all you have”) to be shipped to his son-in-law, Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr., who was managing Monticello in his absence and sent him instructions on how and where they should be planted: “below the lower Roundabout at the North East and about 30 feet apart in a grove, not in rows.”



80 Sugar maple. at the below the lower Roundabout
at the North East end. about 30 feet apart
in a grove, not in rows.

The plants did not survive, but he continued to order seeds and saplings to try again, for “It is too hopeful an object to be abandoned.” In the end, he never did succeed, for as apparently no one had ever told him, what all New England farmers today know, that freezing cold nights followed by warm days are required to produce the sap in enough quantity to succeed in producing syrup. Monticello, unfortunately, did not have that type of climate.

Apparently Jefferson also did not know, and perhaps it had not yet been discovered, that there is a hilly region in western Virginia known today as “Little Switzerland” (I learned of this through the Shedd Library Assistant Librarian, Brenda Gilliland, who has relatives living nearby.) where maple syrup is produced, According to the Highland Co. Chamber of Commerce, the process was learned from the Indians, just as in New England. Their web site advertises an annual Maple Festival each March www.highlandcounty.org/maplefestival, next year’s being their 56th. As a matter of fact, by “Googling” maple sugar festivals, I found that nearly all of our northern states plus several provinces in Canada also now celebrate the maple syrup industry annually, just as New Hampshire does.

*The fire door
of the
evaporator*



*Letters detailing the Jefferson/Madison experiences on this trip have been preserved as part of some 27,000 pages of Jefferson material and transcribed digitally by the Library of Congress at <http://loc.gov> under Thomas Jefferson Papers (1743-1826). Digital scans of these letters (in his own hand-writing) and their transcriptions are available on line. Through a request by Shedd Library’s JoEllen Wright, Rebecca Troy-Horton at the NH State Library, by using the key words sugar maples, retrieved electronically seven excerpts from the letters pertaining to maple trees. She has kindly furnished these references to us, for which we thank them both. Thanks, also, to the wonders of internet research it took only minutes instead of a trip to Washington, DC. A portion of one of these letters is shown here, giving instructions (in Thomas Jefferson’s own hand-writing) on planting 80 sugar maple trees at Monticello!

Washington Historical Society Officers

President:	Phil Barker (495-3640)	Barn Committee:	Phil Barker Richard Crane, advisory
Vice President:	Jack Sheehy (495-3066)	Museum Committee:	Charlotte Treadwell Gwen Gaskell
Treasurer:	Elaine Crandall (495-3416)	Newsletter Committee:	Gwen Gaskell Tom Talpey Barbara Gaskell Betty Talpey
Secretary:	Volunteer Needed	Program/Publicity Committee:	Jack Sheehy Jim Crandall
Archivist:	Gwen Gaskell (495-3231)		
Board of Directors:	Bob Evans (495-1060) Jim Crandall (495-3416) Tom Talpey (495-3284)		
Auditor:	Charlie Fields		
Webmaster:	Brett Kellerman		

Email: washingtonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com

Yes, we have an email address and would like to hear from you about any issue that you feel concerns the Washington Historical Society. We are always open to suggestions for programs that would be of interest for future meetings or things that would enhance our purposes.

Also, we would like your email address so that we might send notices of upcoming programs or events. We are considering sending future newsletters by email to make things easier and less expensive for us and quicker for you. The best way for us to get your accurate address would be for you to send us an email, Thanks for doing so.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES are \$5 for an individual and \$10 for a family (including children under 16). The membership year is August 1, 2013 through July 31, 2014. If you haven't sent us a payment since last June, your membership may have lapsed. In that case there will be a reminder note slipped into this newsletter; if our records are not correct please let us know. 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, P.O. Box 90, Washington, N.H., 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: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone No. Winter: _____ Summer: _____

Email _____

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.



Washington Historical Society
PO box 90
Washington, NH 03280