



Washington Historical Society Newsletter

SPRING 2017 EDITION

Presidents Message

As I sit here recuperating from hernia surgery I have plenty of time (as I am reminded by my sister) to write this column.

We are grieved by the passing of our long time member, friend and volunteer, Betty Talpey.

She was always there with her smile and contribution to the cause, whatever it was. I'll never forget the evening during one of our potluck suppers; I looked up and there was Betty carrying around my empty casserole dish. I asked her what she was doing and she said that she was asking everyone who made that delicious casserole and no one knew. I told her that was because she hadn't asked the right person; I made it. **YOU DID** she exclaimed, what was it? I asked her what she thought it might be. Now everyone was listening and there were some guesses as to the ingredients but nothing close. So I told everyone that it was 'Parsnips and Pears' It was a hit and Betty was flabbergasted.

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Washington Historical Society Officers

President:		Barn Committee:	Phil Barker Volunteers needed
Vice President:	Phil Barker (495-3640)	Museum Committee:	Gwen Gaskell Volunteers needed
Treasurer:	Elaine Crandall (495-3416)	Museum Aide:	Gail Revane
Secretary:	Marian Baker	Newsletter Committee:	Gwen Gaskell Tom Talpey Barbara Gaskell
Archivist:	Gwen Gaskell (495-3231)	Program/Publicity Committee:	Tom Talpey Pete Martin
Board of Directors:	Brenda Gililand Tom Talpey (495-3284) Pete Martin		
Auditor:			
Webmaster:	Phil Budne		

Many people enjoyed the musical talent displayed by Cassie Bachand on our Chickering Square Grand piano. Numerous others would sit down and give us a tune also. If you play the piano please give it a try, we don't want it to just collect dust.

It has been an up and down winter and by the end of January I was saying that it was going to be like the previous one. Then we flipped the calendar and the snow started coming. But after two and a half weeks it changed to warm and we lost all of the February snow before the end of the month. We have recorded over 85" of snow thus far this winter, which is about our 12 year average.

We have been very fortunate to have received some very nice donations this winter and with recent incidents they will be put to good use.

We are in dire need of some younger members that are interested in the activities of our Society. We need help staffing all three of our museums on Saturdays through the summer. And there is behind the scenes work. And if fingers don't know anything but typing and texting yes there is computer work to do.

We are looking forward to an exciting season of meetings, potlucks, programs and fund raisers.

Please join us as often as possible and bring your guests, neighbors and friends. We might be what they are looking for.

Phil Barker

Miss Margaret Hoyt
by Gwen Gaskell

Those of us that were in Washington in the late 1940's and up through the 1960 knew Miss Hoyt and have fond memories.

Miss Margaret Hoyt was born in St Albans, Vermont in 1887 and she had two older sisters. She attended Plymouth Normal School and the University of NH and had a Bachelor of Science degree. At this time a six-week summer course gave one a certificate to teach. I know this as I have some of my grandmother's certificates.

Miss Hoyt taught in several places and after teaching for 60 years planned to retire here in Washington but, in 1948 she was convinced to teach at the Center school. At that time the Center School was Washington's only school in operation and had been opened two years earlier. The Dole school was closed the spring before the Center school was opened and it was sold during 1949 to not burden the school budget and bring tax revenue to the town.

The school still had wood stoves for heat and an outhouse. Sixteen students were enrolled for what could be eight grades but often there would be no students in one or two grades. In 1950-51 the town voted to spend up to \$2,000 dollars to install two bathrooms, septic, water, a bubbler fountain and a modern oil heating system with a structure on the back to house the heating system. The work was done within budget, and is still there today.

The teacher salary was \$2,400 to \$2,800 during the years Miss Hoyt taught. In 1950 the tuition for high school students was \$160 per student of which there were only 6, but by 1970 there were 2 teachers for the grade school earning a total of \$14,200 and 16 high school students for a total tuition of \$12,144 or \$760 per student.

While researching information for this article, I came across the interesting fact that in 1950 the cost of reshingling the District #5 school in East Washington was \$182.67. This year the Historical Society, which has been the owner of the schoolhouse since 1988, has to have the roof done and will be paying in excess of \$6,000.

Miss Hoyt taught at the Center School for four years before finally retiring but she made a lasting impression on those of us she taught. She created school programs, three act plays we performed on stage upstairs in the Town Hall, and Memorial Day programs we presented on the Common. For graduation, she helped her students write essays. After the lunch recess we would relax while she read Thornton Burgess stories to us.

Jim and Ellen Hofford came across a journal Miss Hoyt wrote while she lived in "The Wee House" when she summered in Washington during her teen years. I wish she had shared those adventures with us during those school afternoons. I am transcribing the stories and they will be available for your reading pleasure this summer at the museum.

Miss Hoyt died January 1, 1970.
Here is one of Miss Hoyt's stories

Making Calls

In all established society one makes calls. Calling is in reality a game, and to properly play it, one must follow the rules carefully in each particular.

Here in Washington, we too, make calls but we follow less carefully the established rules.

In the outer world one calls only on especial friends or those with which one wishes to become especial friends, but here- if you are really one of the circle, you call on everyone you know at least a dooryard call.

Perhaps you wonder what sort of a call that may be. Let me explain. First comes the roadside call- when meeting an acquaintance on the highway, you talk and talk, standing first on one foot then the other, but still talking. Next the dooryard call, when you simply stop outside the house and exchange commonplace remarks concerning the crops, weather and local affairs. In the third place comes the real call, when you enter the best room, and feeling rather uncomfortable converse in a constrained manner for a considerable length of time.

As the final step in the degrees of acquaintanceship comes the time when you are invited to eat, and the Washington hostess spreads before you toothsome dainties, which make the table groan.

Well, we came, we saw and we called. First between library and mail time, on Bill and Ada, then with due formality we approached the white door or our neighbor who had come from the far west. She received us without formality. Being busy mending her dress, she kept to her task, and all unmindful of her unusual attire, discourse brilliantly of the far west, that golden land to which we long to journey, so that in the end we may come back to Washington and say, "There is none like you."

She told us of her experiences with the dark "spirits of gossip" which lurk in the Post Office and other public places, and how she bravely defended the Skipper when one dared malign him. She told us the story of Mr. Barden and the "weaker vessel." Just before mail time we bade her goodbye and passed on up the road. Then in the course of days we called on our neighbors toward the west, where we talked of foods and were most graciously fed on peaches and ginger ale, which was rendered more palatable by the presence of one of those interesting persons whom one connects with scandal.

Then there have been calls on Dr. and Mrs. Newman which have been enlivened by the presence of Ina, and the fact that we must clear ourselves of the charge of stuck-up-ishness which had been laid against us. Also we have visited Ethel and have had hard work to persuade Harry that this was not the time for one of those intimate stay-to supper evenings.

There is the call at Mrs. Balls' when we received war cookies, doughnuts, and a piece of cheese and although not of great skill yet, we gladly contributed our few tunes on the tinkling piano and then went on.

These are our visits up to date and someday when we read again these halting lines, we'll see the rooms where in we spent these hours and likewise remember the conversation of these happy days.

It is with great sadness that we announce that one of our most special members, Betty Talpey, passed away on January 22nd at the age of 90.

Betty attended all our meetings and participated with her husband Tom in producing our newsletters. She was a meticulous proof reader who always corrected our work and carefully folded the letters putting on labels and stamps until just two years ago. Her contributions to our pot luck dinners and pie sales were notable. Most of all Betty was a warm and friendly individual who always greeted each of us with a warm smile. She will be missed.

Cards can be sent to Tom at PO Box 285 Washington NH 03280



1963:Purchase of the Farnsworth Farm

By John Brighton

On a summer afternoon when he was six, John sat on the hard pine floor of Doris Rochford's summer camp on Millen Pond playing trucks with her grandson. Adult conversation and laughter filled the room. Doris was his father's secretary and she'd told Ken about a dilapidated old farm for sale thirty miles north of his hometown of Peterborough. The property was in the town of Washington, in the southeast corner of Sullivan County, New Hampshire. It was 1963, and Washington's population was 160. In 1840, it was 1,100.

Many of those 160 people were descendants of multigenerational families who'd first settled the town around 1768. They were the remnants of the few hardy folks who'd chosen to stay behind to eke out a living in the county's rocky highlands. Those who'd departed were seeking a better way of life in cities and towns swept up by the industrial revolution, or the lure of grassy, stone-less farmland in places like Illinois and Iowa. By 1960, Sullivan County was sometimes referred to as "The Forgotten County." The region's manufacturing towns of Newport and Claremont were in a state of gradual decline as factory owners sold their mills to large multi-national firms, or fell victim to the increasing pressure of cheaper products produced in Southeast Asia and other distant lands.

But Sullivan County possesses many clean lakes and ponds that dot its mostly wooded rolling hills. These waters provide an abundant source of the watershed for the Merrimack River Valley to the east and the Connecticut River, bordering Vermont to the West. Prior to the Second World War, and the decades afterward, people were discovering small waterfront lots for sale along the shores of these remote bodies of water. The smallest parcels were called "postage stamp lots" that measured as little as fifty by one-hundred feet. Many owners were war veterans; the tiny parcels they purchased often cost just a few hundred dollars. Families lovingly constructed simple handyman-built camps upon their lots. Water was drawn from the lake for cooking and cleaning, bathing done while swimming, and a simple wooden privy served as a toilet. John's parents had an opportunity to purchase such a lot on Nubanusett Lake in Hillsboro County, but they were drawn to the idea of owning a farm and Doris had told them of just such a place.

As the grownups continued talking, John heard them discuss the pros and cons of the farm they'd just visited. Doris explained that the property was known locally as Waldo Farnsworth's farm. Waldo was a local legend of sorts, he was universally loved by the people around Millen Pond. He was born on the property in 1885 and died tending his potato patch in the hill-field above the house in 1960. Hordes of children from around the lake would ride in the back of Waldo's old pickup truck while he made his milk deliveries around the lake and town. Sometimes he'd treat them to ice cream at the end of his route. On a few very still summer nights, Waldo would row his boat out into the lake and play his musical saw, in the dark, to his invisible audience.

Waldo never married and was the last Farnsworth to live on the farm that had been in his family since about 1806. The Farnsworths were charter members of the first Seventh Day Adventist Church in the world, which was founded in Washington in 1841. The charter for the church was signed under two sugar maples trees that stood in front of Waldo's house. Prior to the congregation's purchase of a proper place of worship, Sabbath services were often convened in the Farnsworth's home on the seventh day of the week, Saturday.

The farm consisted of a brick, Cape Cod-style house with a rambling attachment of barns and detached equipment sheds. Sited on a knoll overlooking the west end of the lake, it included fifteen-hundred feet of waterfront and was surrounded by pasture and cultivable fields. It was one of the few remaining properties yet to succumb to the encroaching forest that had reclaimed at least one-hundred other farms in Washington over the past century. With its additional woodlot, there were 120-acres in all. Years of neglect left the house in need substantial repair, and the barns were in particularly rough condition. Their leaking rooves caused structural decay that was deemed to be terminal. Ken and Betty put these concerns aside and bought the place anyway, closing on the purchase in the summer of 1963.

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ITEMS FOR SALE

FEATURING FAVORITE LANDMARKS OF WASHINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Order by mail or contact: Elaine Crandall (603) 495-3416, ecrandall@verizon.net

Gwen Gaskell (603) 495-3231, jimgwen@gsinet.net

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

Afghan. Featuring scenes of Washington woven into a beautiful memento of our Town. It is available in green or blue on an off white background. \$45.00

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. \$0.50 each or \$5.00 per set

Glass Medallion. The design is adapted from an early 1880s wet plate photograph of the Town Hall made by Gustine L. Hurd. These 3 inch diameter medallions are available in blue or green and look beautiful hanging in a window. \$5.00

Meetinghouse DVD: 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.

The History of Camp Morgan. A booklet compiling the history of Camp Morgan along with memories and stories. \$25.00

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 you order and your zip code.

PROGRAMS FOR WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2017

Meeting monthly, May through October at Camp Morgan Lodge

Meeting Times:	6:00 - 7:00 pm	Pot Luck Supper
	7:00 - 7:30 pm	Business Meeting
	7:30 - 8:30 pm	Program

April 10 Fishing in NH. As Fishing season is about to start, come hear Gardner Murphy, an experienced licensed guide for fishermen and hunters lead a program about Fishing in NH and its history. Bring your own fishing experiences to share.

May 8 Hiking in Washington. Do you know all the different hiking trails in Washington? Jed Schwartz, John Brighton, and Erin Mills will share about the locations, the history of the trails, and the unique natural history the trails offer including snowmobile trails.

June 12 Contra Dancing in NH: Then and Now. Dudley Laufman, long time contra dance caller, will bring this New England tradition to life with stories, poems, and recordings of callers, musicians and dancers. He'll play live music on the fiddle and melodeon and lead one dance at the end of the presentation.

July 1 Pie Sale at Annual Flea Market on the Common

July 10 History of Washington, NH Before it Became a Town. Ron Jager, local historian and author of the Portrait of a Hill Town 1876-1976 will share about his newest writings on the life in Washington before it became incorporated into a town.

August 14 Annual Meeting

August 14 New England Quilts and the Stories They Tell. Pam Weeks will share how quilts tell stories and quilt history, and are full of myths and misinformation as well as heart-warming tales of service and tradition. You are invited to bring a quilt for identification/ and or storytelling.

Sept. 1 Pot Roast Supper-??

Sept. 11 Sharing Memories on the History of Washington. A mixed panel of residents of Washington, both summer residents and year round ones, will share their memories of our town, including memories from a journal of the 1920's. Come add your favorite memories of Washington in the past.

Oct 9 TBA.

Museum & Barn Hours: July & August, Saturdays 10 am- 2 pm or by appointment any time.
Call Gwen Gaskell at 495-3231

District #5 School Hours: July & August, Saturdays 1 - 3 pm or by appointment any time.
Call Gwen Gaskell at 495-3231

1963: Purchase of the Farnsworth Farm—continued

For John's parents, the task ahead must have seemed almost insurmountable, but they tackled the project with optimism and good humor. The years of neglect both in and outside of the buildings convinced his father he needed to hire someone to help. Ken asked around town and was introduced to a local character by the name of Wendell Ashley. Originally from near Rutland, Vermont, Wendell and his wife Lottie lived near the village in a modest house across from the old cemetery. Their home stood at the edge of the road leading to the farm and was infamous for the dozen or so abandoned cars and trucks scattered about their property. A few of the derelicts were operable, but most had been aggressively scavenged for parts to be used in whatever patched-together vehicle Wendell happened to be driving. Wendell's vehicular creations epitomized a Rube Goldberg style that carried-over to his building construction techniques. He could do and did do everything; including wiring, plumbing, carpentry and roofing.

Wendell loved rolling-stock and was particularly fond of one vehicle he'd built; the "Doodlebug." The doodlebug was his hill-country version of the Cape Cod dune buggy. Built on a truck frame with heavy suspension and large tires, it looked a bit like a tractor and was rugged enough to negotiate rough roads in the backcountry, plow snow or move old cars around his yard. Wendell spoke rapidly with a rather high-pitched voice and a Yankee accent. John's grandmother was amused by Wendell's eccentricities and affectionately referred to him as "Well Done," which she abbreviated to "Weldon."

With Wendell's hard work, the old place gradually came back to life. The barns were grudgingly razed and the surrounding yard graded over. But the house had been saved, along with the old cooper's shed that sits across the road from the brick house. "The Little House," as John's mother called it, was originally used for making wooden sap buckets and barrels. It was tidied-up sometime in the 1840's by the Seventh Day Adventists. They used the building as a schoolhouse and called it "Cooper University." John's mother used it as her art studio, where she sculpted in clay and stone.

Museum News
By Gwen Gaskell

Last fall we reported that we were going to have painting done at the museum, barn and school house but family incidents and the weather got in the way of that happening so it is scheduled for this spring as soon as weather permits.

We were notified that some shingles were coming off the East Washington school house with the high winds we have had recently. Upon inspection, our local roofer reported that it would not leak but did need to have new shingles this season. At this time we are in the process of signing a contract with him, to get on his schedule. The cost is in excess of \$6,000 for the job with green IKO limited lifetime architectural shingles. We were the recipients of some gifts last fall and this winter which will help offset the cost of this job but your donation toward it will be appreciated.

During the winter the Society was contacted by a man working on a magazine article about Washington, so Phil and I met with him and will undoubtedly be contacted again as to when it may be published.

We have had a collection of 1900 era pictures given to us which were not in our collection, as well as an oil lamp which is said to be one of the originals that were in the town hall. These will be in the new acquisition case at the museum this summer.

The other item of new interest is the transcribed writings of Miss Hoyt. Read more about this interesting woman in the article about her in this newsletter.

I am looking for a volunteer to work with me in the archives, to learn what I do and possibly teach me some new "tricks". There is a lot of work and more than one person should know where things are and how the computer system is set up. Anyone with a few free hours of time, here or there - PLEASE talk to me.

Don't forget our Gift Shop. Bring any item you would like to put in, to a meeting or to the museum when it opens. The more items, the more interesting it is.

Museum & Barn open Saturdays in July and August 10 -2 or by appointment. The Schoolhouse in East Washington is open Saturdays in July and August 1-3 or by appointment.

Washington Historical Society
PO Box 90
Washington, NH 03280

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES are \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family (including children under 16). For those who would like to contribute more to the Society 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, 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: _____ 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.