

## Washington Historical Society Newsletter

FALL 2008 EDITION

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I feel honored to serve as President of the Washington Historical Society because of the good foundation established over 25 years by previous presidents, boards and volunteers. The society means a great deal to me as Washington has always been my home, in my heart if not always in my presence, and my family goes back to the founders of the town. The society is vital to preserving the best of the past so that it may be passed on to our future generations.

While I am very optimistic about our future, there are several areas of concern to me that I hope to address to improve our relevance and strength of our foundation to serve the future. First is increasing the number of volunteers. Currently we often find that too much is being done by too few. Just think of how much more we could do or how much easier it would be if members volunteered just four hours a year. We need help as guides at the museum, the barn and the schoolhouse as well as meeting setups, painting, lawn mowing, gardening and particularly the various fundraising activities.

Secondly, I would like to improve our financial footing. Our family dues are only \$10.00. Couldn't members add to that for support? We are a tax-deductible organization. Some of our members annually contribute more than their basic dues. How about joining that special group by including a small gift amount in your check when paying your dues? How about a contribution in your will? Currently we depend on various fundraising activities to cover operating costs. It would be so much better if those funds could go into building a surplus or special projects.

On a lighter note plans are coming together for next year's Old Home Days. The theme is "Remember When" and the dates are July 31st, August 1st and August 2nd. Many activities are planned for each day and our spring newsletter will give much more information. Of particular note, we will be serving an old-fashioned ham and bean supper on Saturday night, August 1st. Volunteers are welcomed as this involves a lot of effort.

When this letter arrives no doubt your holiday season plans will be well underway. I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy season.

Sincerely,

Jim Crandall, President, Washington Historical Society

## **PUBLIC CORN HUSKING BEE**

*By Richard Crane*

Husking Bees were popular in the 1800s and into the 1900s. In this area local farmers such as the Crane brothers (Roscoe, Nat, Perley and Elmer) had them in the 1940s and 1950s. Farmers hosted these events at their farms as a way to get their harvested corn crop husked and ready for the grist mill and to celebrate the end of the harvest. The meal was fed as grain to the livestock during the winter, as was the fodder (chopped corn stalks.)



*Pile of corn to be husked, and some of the attendees at the start of the bee.*



*Making corn husk dolls.*



*A finished corn husk doll.*

The Historical Society sponsored an old fashioned husking bee in the barn on Oct. 25th, which was attended by 30 or 40 interested members and guests. The dictionary defines a "bee" as a gathering of neighbors for work and competition, as a means for getting the task done. In addition to visiting with friends and neighbors and the husking itself, there were also discussions of shelling corn, and making corn meal, as well as other uses of corn.

We include a few of the pictures taken at the event, including a photograph of a young girl, Abigail Reynolds, clutching her award for finding the largest number of the prized "red ears."



*An ear of Abenaki red corn.*



*Abigail Reynolds and her prize for finding the most red ears.*



*Richard Crane standing beside his field of heritage corn. Some of the stalks reached to a height of 16 feet.*

Richard Crane grew and harvested a field of heritage corn especially for this event, after searching for two years before finding seed for the authentic Abenaki Flint Indian Corn, with the help of the NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill, and the readers of the Weekly Market Bulletin. Because frost, hail, sleet and snow came every month of the year in 1816 in New England, this corn (which came from Calais, VT) was the only variety to survive. It is referred to variously as the "year without a summer," the "year of Eighteen Hundred and froze to death," and in Massachusetts as the "mackerel year" because that state lost all of its corn and residents had to eat mackerel fish instead.



*Three ears of Abenaki corn.*

## **SUMMER AT THE MUSEUM AND BARN**

*By Gwen Gaskell*

This was a fairly busy summer at the museum with many visitors enjoying the World War II display and learning about the first 25 years of the Historical Society activities. Next summer the display will follow the theme of the Old Home Day "Remember When".

This summer the museum was given some interesting acquisitions. We found pictures of Gardiner and Irene (Buntin) Codman as well as one of Deacon Samuel P. Bailey on his 100th birthday for sale on eBay which we were able to acquire for our collection. We also added a small glass tray with a picture of the town common, a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) patch, old kitchen utensils, a framed Sawyer Print of the rebuilt mill on Mill Street. The most recent gift is a pair of wonderful autograph books, one dating back to 1835. These will be very interesting to research on cold winter days to provide a report next spring.

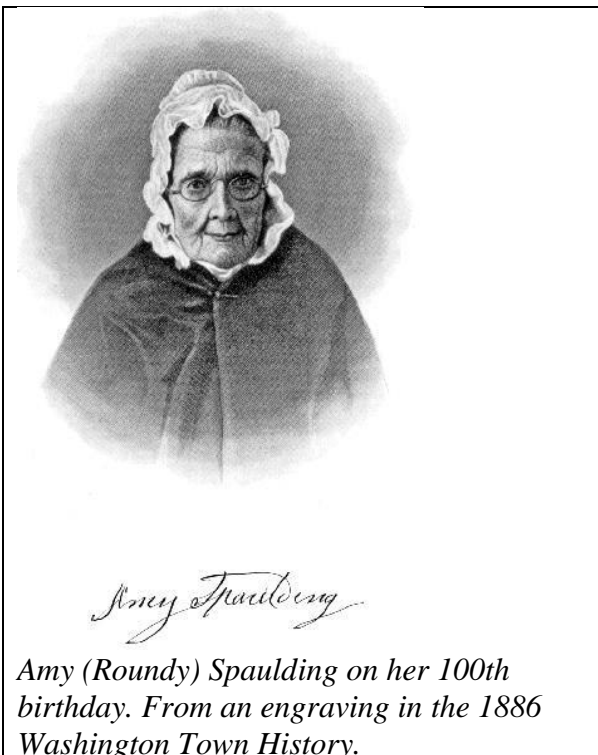
The barn was also the recipient of gifts which included a bull rake, a motor driven tree tapper, a single corn sheller and a milk bottle. We have been fortunate to have Grant Cole working on the blacksmith/workshop space and it is progressing nicely.

The flax and weaving days as well as the husking bee and dance were all interesting and fun in case you were not able to attend.

We were very pleased to be hosts to more than 20 members from the Jaffrey Historical Society on the 19th of October for a tour of our Museum, Barn and Schoolhouse. It was a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon on a beautiful fall day with a special side trip to Burbank Rd. to view the new windmills on Lempster and Bean Mts.

## **FOUR WASHINGTON CENTENARIANS**

*By Tom Talpey*



There are four people that we are aware of in Washington's history who truly deserve to be respected. They all lived to be over 100 years old!

The **first** was Amy (Roundy) Spaulding, the wife of one of Washington's original settlers, Ebenezer Spaulding. Ebenezer died in 1808, but Amy lived on for over 50 years beyond him. A brief account of her life and her portrait, which is reproduced here, appear in the 1886 History of Washington.

She was born in Windham, CT, on March 29, 1759, and moved with her parents to Lempster when she was twelve. The History book says that she rode the entire distance on horseback, with her 3-year old sister sitting "in front of her on the same horse, the balance of the load consisting of a brass kettle and a bag filled with provisions." Other members of the Roundy family, together with their household effects, rode in an ox cart. To quote further from the 1886 History book: "They found no house in readiness for them on their arrival, but constructed one of logs, without floor, its roof of bark, and its fire place the side of a huge rock. They 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."

In January of 1777, at the age of 17, she was married to a neighbor, Ebenezer Spaulding, their marriage being the first recorded by the Town Clerk of Washington. At that time the section of Lempster where they settled was within the boundaries of Washington, along the Ashuelot River. (The boundary line was changed in the 1790s, so that the property today, along with the Spaulding family graveyard, is actually in the town of Lempster.) They had a total of ten children, born from 1777 to 1800, three girls and seven boys, all of them born in Washington. One of the girls died in childhood, but the other nine children all married and most of them had large families of their own.

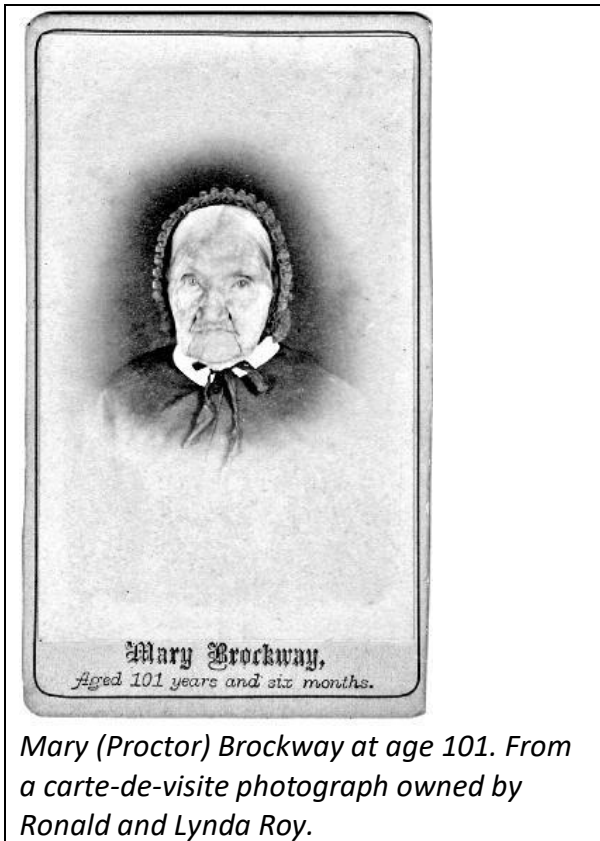
In 1807 Ebenezer and Amy moved from their house near the Ashuelot River to East Washington, where she lived for the rest of her life. The 1886 Washington Town History relates that "Her centennial birth day was publicly celebrated in the Baptist church at East Washington where a large number of her neighbors, 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." She died on June 8, 1859, two months and ten days after her 100th birthday and is buried in the cemetery behind the East Washington Baptist Church. There are several descendants of Amy Spaulding who live today in the town of Washington.



*Mary Brockway's kitchen. From a postcard*



*in the museum's collection. This house is still standing in East Washington.*



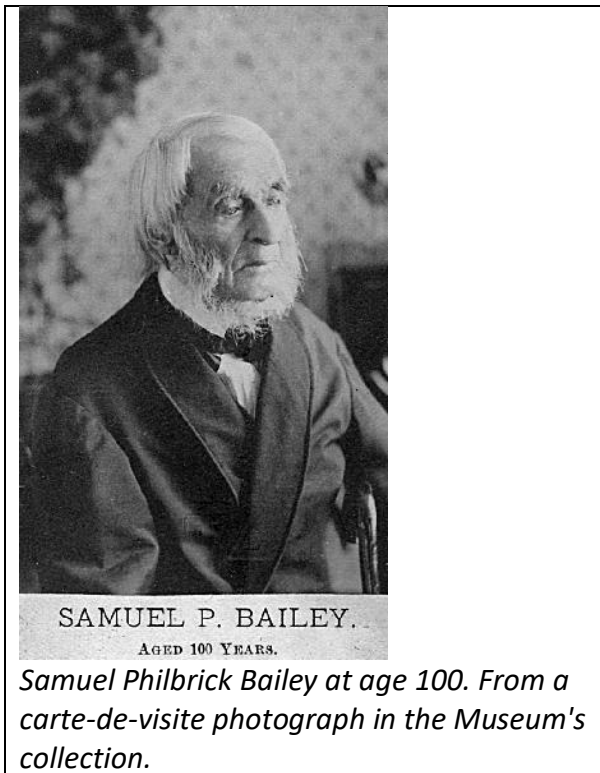
The **second** of our centenarians, Mary (Proctor) Brockway, was born in Chelmsford, MA, on April 6, 1770, and moved with her parents to Washington at the age of five years, where they settled on a farm near Millen Pond. At the age of 18, on February 24, 1789, she married Jonathan Brockway, Jr. and, according to the Washington History book, she spent her honeymoon, if it can be called that, "in the woods with her husband, where they were engaged in making maple sugar."

In the spring they moved to East Washington and took possession of land which had been "deeded to her husband by his father, and was an almost or quite unbroken forest." (This property later became the farm owned by George W. Carr and is presently owned by Richard and Lynn Cook.) Again quoting from the 1886 History of Washington: "She aided with her own hands in erecting a humble dwelling which stood nearly in front of the spot where the large [Carr/Cook] house now stands. Many hardships, unavoidably, had to be endured in subduing the wilderness and building up their new home. Bears were numerous and often gave the new settlers alarm. At one time she left the house for a short time, its only occupant being a sleeping infant; returning she was horrified at the sight of a huge bear entering her front door. Her presence of mind caused her to make no outcry and the bear walked slowly through the house and passed out the back door, leaving the child unharmed."

Jonathan, Jr. and Mary had ten children, four girls and six boys. Two of the children died in childhood, but the remaining eight married and had families of their own. Jonathan Brockway, Jr. died in 1847, but Mary continued to live for another 25 years. One of their daughters, Mary, had married Caleb W. Carr (the father of George W. Carr, mentioned above) who in 1830 built the large house now standing on the spot, and it is believed that Mary spent her last years in that house with her daughter and son-in-law, who had inherited the house and farm. The accompanying photograph, taken from a post card in the Museum collection, shows the

kitchen of that house. At the lower left corner of the card is written the name Jennie Carr, who was Mary's great grand-daughter. According to the 1886 Washington Town history, Mary "retained her mental faculties to the close of life, and entertained many visitors, by her interesting and intelligent conversation relating to by-gone times." She died on March 7, 1872, at the great age of one hundred and one years and eleven months. She is buried in the cemetery behind the East Washington Baptist Church. Her daughter, Mary (Brockway) Carr, died about six months later.

Lynda and Ronald Roy (a descendant of the Brockway family) have in their possession a "Carte de Visite" photograph, taken by Charles F. McClary (successor to Solon Newman at the photographic studio in Hillsborough) which they have graciously allowed us to copy and reproduce here. It is a portrait of Mary Brockway at age 101 years and six months.



The **third** of our centenarians is Samuel Philbrick Bailey, who was born in South Weare, NH, on February 27, 1780, and moved to Washington in 1801 where he cleared the land and built a house on what is now called Bailey Hill Road. The next year he married Betsy Balch, by whom he had five children. She died in 1813 and in July 1816 he married Betsy Harriman, by whom he had another five children. For a number of years he was a Deacon of the Christian Church in the center of Washington.

Deacon Bailey was known as a well educated man of superior intelligence and served as Selectman for several years in the 1820s. Along with two of his sons he was a member of the committee in 1849 creating the well known Tubbs Union Academy, which flourished in town for over 50 years as a type of private preparatory school before the State established the system of tuition free "high schools," funded by town taxpayers. He was a charter member of the Mount Vernon Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, which was then located in Washington and served for many years as its secretary before it was moved to Newport. In his older years he developed the pastime of composing acrostics, writing over one thousand of them with exceptional penmanship for a man of his age and sending them to friends and newspapers all over the country. (We have reproduced one

of them below.)

<b>AN ACROSTIC</b> <i>Written by Samuel P. Bailey at age 92, during the Presidential campaign of 1872</i>	
<p><b>G</b>racious Lord, preserve our nation R<b>R</b>esolve the wisest man shall rule A<b>A</b>nd no bad man in creation N<b>N</b>ever suffer to be a tool, T<b>T</b>o gratify a rebel race.</p> <p><b>O</b>nly good men place in power R<b>R</b>efuse all who would bring disgrace</p>	<p><b>G</b>overn all such tho' they feel sour, R<b>R</b>ulers should be wise and prudent E<b>E</b>ver trying to do their best E<b>E</b>nduring what they can't prevent L<b>L</b>earning, hoping, to be blest, E<b>E</b>nough poor rulers we have had Y<b>Y</b>our choice obtain and so be glad.</p>
<p>Note added at end: in Dea. Bailey's handwriting, age 92.</p>	<p><i>This year there will be much striving To elect a president, And with some, be vainly conniving For which, they should all repent. (Welcome him, whom God has sent) Sept. 2, 1872.</i></p>

Quoting from the 1886 Washington Town History: "As the time drew near when he would attain his one hundredth birthday, his Lodge of Masons, which had removed to Newport, and of which he had been so long an honored member, decided that the day ought not to pass without an appropriate celebration. .... The Masonic fraternity in surrounding towns united with the Mount Vernon Lodge to make the occasion one of the most noteworthy celebrations that had ever occurred in Washington. Early in the day a lodge was instituted in the town hall, in which the venerable member took a part. The doors were then thrown open to the public, and the hall was soon filled with the friends and neighbors of the centenarian." Seated in an elegant easy chair on the platform and surrounded by other aged persons, including his friend and neighbor Capt. Charles French, aged 95, and after more than a half dozen introductory addresses and recitations, Deacon Bailey was presented with "an autograph album containing the names of all the Masons present, and who represented twenty lodges."



*The homestead of Samuel Bailey, on Bailey*



*Hill Road. The house is no longer standing: all that remains is a cellar hole. Date of the photograph is not known, so positive identification of the individuals has not been possible. From a negative in the Manahan-Phelps-McCulloch Collection of the Hillsborough Historical Society. Used with permission.*

"The health of Deacon Bailey continued very good until the following July, when he was attacked with dysentery, which caused his death" on July 12, 1880, one hundred years and nearly four months old. We have reproduced above a photograph taken on the day before his one hundredth birthday, by George W. Lincoln of Hillsborough, from a carte de visite which is in the Museum's collection.

The **fourth** and last in our roster of Washington centenarians is Carroll E. Farnsworth, born in Washington on March 7, 1884. He married Amy A. Cross in 1912, and they had three children, two boys and one girl. (Philip, d. 1935, Harold, d. 10/21/2007, and Carolyn, m. Lester Small. She died in 1981. Harold married Anna Mary Beckner, d. 10/6/1998, and they had two children: Erwin and Virginia, both still living.)



*Carroll E. Farnsworth at age 100. From a photograph in the Washington 4-H Home Town News of October 1984, in the museum's collection.*

Carroll farmed the old Daniel Millen homestead, also known as the Chestnut Glen Farm, on what is now called Valley Road and lived many years later near the south end of Millen Pond Road. In his early twenties he taught school for a term (in 1905) at the District #9 School in Cherry Valley when it was a sawmill village. His mandate on accepting the job was to "go in there and keep order." Again in 1907 he taught at the District #7

school near Russell's Mill Pond on the south side of Ashuelot Pond. He used to row back and forth to work there, taking with him one of the students, a neighbor boy <sup>\*</sup>. His grandfather, Cyrus K. Farnsworth, and Cyrus's brother William were pillars of the first Seventh Day Adventist Church, founded in Washington in 1841. Carroll was a life-long member of this original Seventh Day Adventist Church and he served for many years as its treasurer. Among his first childhood memories was attending the funeral of his great uncle William in 1890 <sup>\*\*</sup>.



Carroll Farnsworth at the steering bar of the first automobile owned by a Washingtonian. His brother Waldo sits next to him and his parents, Elgin & Ida are in the rear. From a photograph in Portrait of a Hill Town, by Ronald and Grace Jager, used with permission

Although "horseless carriages" had been seen in Washington beginning about 1897, Carroll has the distinction of being the first Washington resident to own one <sup>\*</sup>. There had been autos in Washington before, driven to and through Washington by summer visitors and there is an amusing account in the Jagers' book of some of the more notable episodes which had occurred. Carroll purchased his in July 1911 by mail from the Sears & Roebuck Co. and it came by freight train to Hillsborough. With the help of his father and brother it was assembled at the train depot in Hillsborough, filled up with gasoline and then driven to Washington. Quoting Carroll, from the Jagers' book: "Got there safely, took Crane's hills quite easily. It had twin cylinders, air cooled and friction drive, hard rubber tires."

Carroll was known in town (among other things) as a skilled bobcat hunter and with his dog Alek on four different occasions bagged two cats in one day. He was a talented woodsman and surveyor and served several terms as Selectman. He also played a violin and there is a picture in "Portrait of a Hill Town" (page 277) of him playing at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, together with his brother Waldo on his musical saw and his cousin Leslie White at the piano.

#### Counting Out

Reprinted from Nov. 1983 issue of 4-H Club's Home Town News

*It was one of New Hampshire's perfect days for bobcat hunting. So with my friend, Fred Mellen, we were looking for trails. Surely the little cat-dog was along. He had recently followed one into its den and had gotten badly scratched and chewed. So we didn't know how he felt about doing it again. When about a mile*

*from my brother's place we found a trail. I let Alek go on it. He began barking very soon and was soon out of hearing, so we hurried as fast as we could.*

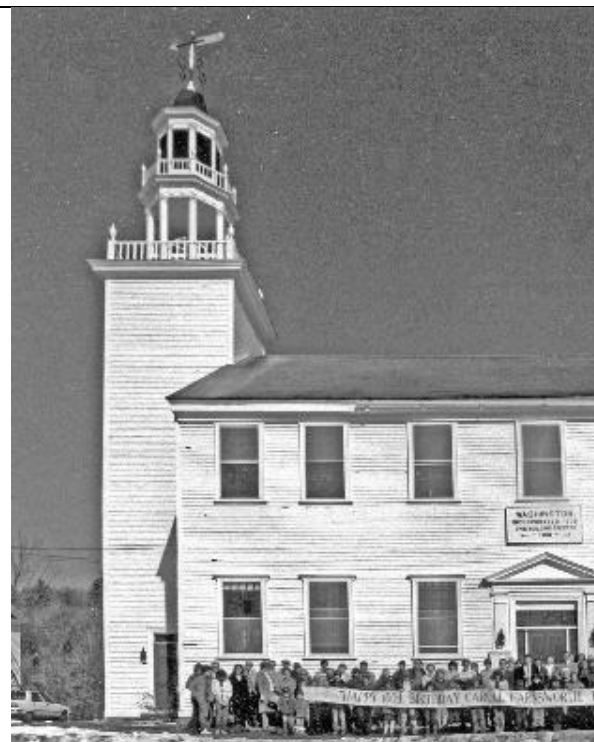
*The next we heard he was barking up a tree, and getting in sight we found it was one of the largest, tallest sugar maples. The cat was lying in the first crotch, some 40 feet up, its head being the main part showing. One of us said "Let's count out." So that's what we did; two shots almost as one and the cat died instantly, just his head dropping was the only movement.*

*Now, how to get him was the big problem. After trying this and that, we decided to go the two miles back to my brother's place and get a saw and ax and cut the tree. Brother was anxious to go too. With his help we soon had the tree down and our big cat with us, glad to show it as his trophy to the doggie.*

*From The Old Timer, Carroll Farnsworth*

Carroll moved to Walla Walla, Washington, at age 87 to live with his son and his family. Soon thereafter, under the by-line "The Old Timer," he became a regular contributor to the Washington 4-H Club's Home Town News, a mimeographed publication \*\*\* which was circulated locally from 1980 to 1985.

Just a few months shy of his 99th birthday, Carroll was voted an honorary member of our Historical Society when it held its first formal meeting on Dec. 13, 1982. Fifteen months later he was remembered by his home town with a 100th birthday card in the form of a photo (reproduced below) of a huge crowd of well wishers holding a large banner in front of the Town Hall. He died in Walla Walla on Jan. 3, 1986, just a couple of months before his 102nd birthday and is buried with his wife in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in College Park, Walla Walla, WA.



Photograph of a scroll sent to Caroll Farnsworth from his friends in Washington, on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Museum collection.

Some of the material pertaining to Carroll Farnsworth came as result of letters and emails written by Gwen Gaskell to his descendants. Readers who knew Carroll or Amy are strongly urged to write telling us of their memories and stories. We will plan to use some in our Spring newsletter.

Other references:

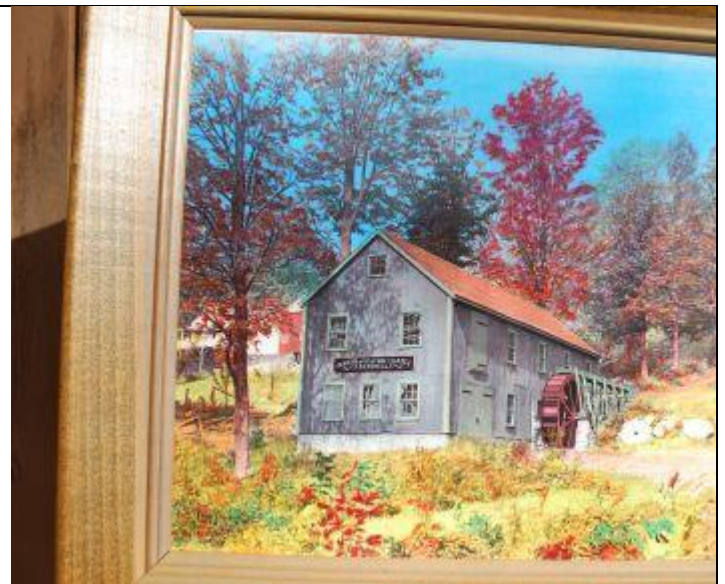
\* From "Portrait of a Hill Town" by Ronald and Grace Jager, pages 157-162.

\*\* From an article written by Carroll's son Harold for the Pacific Northwest Gleaner on the occasion of Carroll's 101st birthday.

\*\*\* The Museum has a complete set of this essentially monthly six to eight-page publication from its first issue in May 1980 through the final issue of Aug. 1985.

## SAWYER PRINT PRESENTED TO WHS BY WARNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Copy of the Sawyer Print presented to our Museum by the Warner Historical Society, depicting the reconstructed up-and-down water driven saw mill, built by our former president Harold Yeaton, located at the junction of Mill St. and Half Moon Pond Road.*



## FLAGPOLE REPAIR AT OLD DISTRICT #5 SCHOOLHOUSE



Early this summer it was discovered that the rope and pulley at the top of the flagpole on the front of the District #5 Schoolhouse in East Washington had worn out and needed replacement. Our thanks to the public spirited crew from the Granite State Telephone Co, for easily accomplishing the repair with their bucket truck and extension ladder.

## YANKEE INGENUITY OR ANOTHER USE FOR CORN

When farmers around Washington wanted to clear a field for planting they ran into two problems: Rocks and Big Trees. The rocks could be used for rock walls lining the field, but removing the stumps of big trees, firmly anchored in the



ground, was a different story. We were told that one trick, believable at least to a flatlander, was to take a crowbar and make holes in the ground around the larger roots, stuff ears of corn down the holes and then let the hogs into the pasture. After a few weeks the pigs, in rooting out the corn, will have loosened the roots enough to make the stumps easy to remove.

## THE FIRST WIND FARM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



Views of the windmills being installed on Lempster and Bean Mountains. Expected to be finished by Christmas, the installation will consist of a total of 12 windmills, capable of generating enough power for 10,000 homes. Distance from the top of the blade tip to the ground is about 400 feet. The line of windmills is easily viewed from Lempster Mountain Road in Washington or at the intersection with Route 10 in East Lempster. The complete story from the NH Business Review can be found by typing Lempster Wind Farm into Google.

### **Copied verbatim from the minutes of the Universalist's Ladies Circle, found by chance in the Town Archives, for Oct. 20, 1858:**

"Met at Mrs. Esqr. Healy's. Worked on rug. At tea there were nine. It might not be uninteresting to some of the curious fifty years hence, if I should jot down the topics of conversation among a circle of ladies of the year 1858. What, by comparison, they might learn if this circle, if it shall then exist, or the tone of conversation among ladies in general shall have risen; or whether among ladies in aal times the world over is chit-chat, laugh, and grow fat." S. SHEDD, Clerk

This was written *150 years ago!* by Sarah Shedd. The ladies of the circle could not have been too disturbed by the comment as they kept her on as clerk for another year. The same quotation has been used in an excellent biography of Sarah Shedd, written by one of hour members, Ron Jager -- *Rumors of Sainthood: Sarah Shedd of Washington.*

## A PHOTO FROM YESTERYEAR



The Lovell House hotel stood in the center of town, butting up against the present brick house at the left end and leaving only a ten foot passageway between the far right tower and the church next door. Note the side of the church barely visible at the extreme right of the picture. The entire length was 250 feet; the covered porch itself was 109 feet long. Looking at the space today, it doesn't seem that it would fit. The original Lovell House (1802) is the two-storied porch to the left of the center of the picture, with its horse sheds at the far left. Note the old cars in front of the main building (built in 1891) and in front of the Lovell House. Parts of the hotel were torn down over the years to prevent tramps and vandals from destroying it, the section with the long porch disappearing in 1935 and the original Lovell House itself in 1965. Museum postcard collection.

*From a brochure in the museum collection, c. 1913.  
Note alternative spelling of Lovell and the error in  
altitude.*

*It is actually 1532 feet.*

*Rates \$10-\$15 per week, including meals.*

—\* MOUNT LOVEWELL HOUSE \*—  
... 1650 FEET ABOVE THE SEA ...

SITUATED in the village of Washington, New Hampshire. Has seventy sleeping rooms, many of them being connected and convenient for families or party of friends. Equipped with modern sanitary furnishings. Has large Dining Room, with capacity for one hundred guests. Table supplied with fresh milk, and vegetables direct from the farm. There is a Dancing Hall, Reading Room, Library, Bowling Alley, Tennis Court and Croquet Grounds. The House has a Shady Veranda the entire length, which commands an extensive view of mountain, and landscape scenery.

OUR Rates are made in accordance with the times and range from \$10.00 to \$15.00 per week.

APPLY TO S. N. BALL & SON, WASHINGTON, N. H.

*Thanks are due to members Sue Hofstetter, composing editor, and to Barbara Gaskell of Premier Printing for getting this issue in print in a timely fashion.*