

Newsletter... June 2015

Brentwood Historical Society



Welcome New and Returning Members

A warm and hearty welcome to all the members of Brentwood's Historical Society. We go back further than some might think. The organization started almost 50 years ago, in the mid-1960s. For the first 10 or 12 years we met in people's homes or wherever we could find a spot. Beginning in 1979 when the new Town Office was open, our meetings were held there.

The Grange building was turned over to the Town in 1982, and it was agreed that the Town would maintain the outside of the building while the Historical Society would develop and maintain the interior. Slowly but surely, the walls of two first floor rooms have been paneled in pine, a furnace and rest-room installed, display cases and shelves acquired, and the Historical Society Museum has become a very pleasant place to visit.

Throughout all those years the Society has sponsored a long succession of programs, speakers and events. Those of the last twelve years are listed on the website, www.brentwoodnhhistory.org. The Society has also issued three publications: *Brentwood's 225 Years, 1742-1967*; the *Program and Historical Souvenir, 250th Anniversary of the town (1992)*; and *Notes and References to Brentwood's 225 Years*. Our members also compiled a comprehensive index of all the graves in the town's 26 cemeteries. Other compilations are constantly being done.

There is always more to do, and we welcome your interest and support. We look forward to seeing you at our gatherings in the coming months.

The N.H. Preservation Alliance Might Be Useful for You

The Brentwood Historical Society just became a member of the N.H. Preservation Alliance. Headquartered in Concord for the last 30 years, it is a non-profit organization that gathers information and resources that help property owners save and revitalize their irreplaceable landmarks. A large part of their efforts go toward helping communities preserve their historic buildings. But they also offer information and resources for the owners of old houses and barns.

If you're the owner of an old house or barn, don't miss checking out www.nhpreservation.org. Three sections on the Main Menu on their Home Page will take you to a lot of information and save a lot of time searching. Those sections are "Get Answers," "Preservation Directory" and "Store & Downloads."

"Get Answers"

- Includes links to Old House and Barn Workshops, FAQs about Barns, Getting Started, and Old House Success Stories.

"Preservation Directory"

- A long list of contractors, consultants, craftspeople and organizations that adhere to a preservation ethic and are members of the Preservation Alliance.

The link called "Browse Listings" is like a phone directory of all the above contractors, consultants, etc. in the Preservation Directory, complete with the name of the contact person, email address and website link.

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NH Preservation Alliance continued

“Store & Downloads”

● From the on-line store, owners of old homes might like *Save Your Wood Windows, Window Weatherization Kit, Guidelines for Porch Repair and Replacement, or Painting Historic Exteriors.*

● Barn owners might choose *Preserving Old Barns: Preventing the Loss of a Valuable Resource.*

The details above don't even touch on the workshops available, the Barn Assessment Grants, and other information available through a phone call or email. If you decide you want to contact any of the sources listed, it wouldn't hurt to identify yourself as a member of the Brentwood Historical Society, which is a member of the N.H. Preservation Alliance.



*What Can You Do at a
Museum Open
House?*

- Browse through the two rooms of exhibits.
- From the Library Corner, choose 1 or 2 scrap-books, open them on a counter and take a trip back 30 to 50 years.
- Look over the history-oriented books in the Library Corner. Pick one out and leaf through it.
- Make a note of our cemetery records, church records, and birth & death records. This is a good place to look if one has genealogy questions.
- Sit down at the "Museum Busy-Work" table and help by spending a few minutes on the museum

*Members & Friends to Tour Two
Portsmouth Houses July 18*

Members recently received a notice about a special tour of two historic Portsmouth houses, which has been arranged for **Saturday, July 18.** It's a rather rare opportunity because these houses are open only on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of June-October. It combines two very different kinds of viewing. You might have "put off" seeing the Jackson House (c. 1664) because it has no furnishings; but the way the architectural and construction details are presented have made it a prime attraction for years. It's the kind of house Shakespeare was comfortable living in!

The Rundlet-May House (1807) more than makes up for the lack of furnishings in the Jackson House. James Rundlet was an Exeter boy who made good in snobbish Portsmouth and built a home to outdo all others. The furniture in the house includes many pieces made by Portsmouth craftsmen. It composes one of the finest collections in the Federal style associated with a single property.

Historic New England (formerly the NE Society for the Preservation of Antiquities) uses excellent volunteer guides for its tours. They ask for attendance figures almost 3 weeks in advance so they can arrange for the guides; therefore we ask that you **sign up by June 30.** **Non-members are welcome on the tour.** Please notify Linda Rousseau, lindarou@comcast.net or call 580-2358.

Cost for the day is \$10 per person, to be paid to us at the Museum before departure. Bring a picnic lunch and blanket or chair for our picnic on the grounds at Jackson House. The schedule:

10:00 am	Meet at Museum. Carpooling available.
10:15	Depart for Portsmouth.
11:00	Tour of Jackson House (approx. 35 mins.).
11:45	Picnic on Jackson House grounds.
12:40 pm	Drive to Rundlet-May House.
1:00 pm	Tour of Rundlet-May (approx. 1 hour).
2:00 pm	Head for home.

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Recent Photos



December 14, 2013: Boy Scout Jason Sisk, who constructed the new patio, with Alma Vahey, who presented him with an appreciation certificate from the Historical Society.



October 10, 2014: Small group discussion during "How to Gather Family Stories."



July 4, 2014: Opening of our Flag Display.



Dec. 9, 2014: A large audience came out in a storm to hear Michael Tougias talk about Coast Guard rescues in *Their Finest Hours*.



Sept, 13, 2014: Randall Davis and Gary Farnham cranked out apple cider during "Spotlight on the Grange."



April 9, 2015: Another great crowd came to hear "12,000 Years Ago in the Granite State." Afterward Dr. Robert Goodby discussed an artifact with Albert Belanger and Norman Lemoine.

Dairy Business in Brentwood

Almost all small farmers had a few head of cattle and shipped milk in 20 or 40 quart cans that were picked up by truck, first at the farm, then later at a certain spot, perhaps at the end of the road or at an island where two roads converged. That soon changed with the times when it didn't pay the creamery to pick up the cans, and they went to a tank truck, which in turn meant the farmers had to install a tank in a separate room and a whole new way of getting the milk from the cow to the tank – and the small farms couldn't afford that. A few of the larger farms hung on until their herds had to be diminished by a government mandate, and thus began the decline of dairy farms in Brentwood, unless you had a large operation.

Brentwood was home to several good sized dairy farms. The George Sanborn farm on Deer Hill Road was a major contributor to the dairy business until the mid-1960s. Lyford's Creamery Brook Creamery was for many years one of the largest creameries in the area and farmers from all local towns brought their cream here to be processed. They also maintained a large herd and sold butter, milk and cream. The Museum has several butter molds from the Lyford farm. The combination of a disastrous fire, the coming of state-mandated pasteurization and the competition from large processing plants eventually caused the Lyfords to cease operations. The creamery was the first casualty about 1938 and by 1954 the dairy herd was no more. The farm is now operating as Stout Oak Farm, focusing on vegetables and chickens.

John F. Swasey on Pickpocket Road had a large dairy herd for many years and his son Joe, who just passed away last year at 101, carried it on until about 1970. The farm had been in the family for many generations.

Shortly after World War II Stevens Dairy built a small building for pasteurizing and homogenizing milk and making heavy and light cream, becoming

a complete dairy operation. They even put two retail trucks on the road for home delivery to local communities. The Stevens farm remained in business until 1983. In 1946 George Gilman began to purchase milk from more than a dozen farms and started Laurel Farms Dairy on Pickpocket Road, establishing retail and wholesale routes in many surrounding towns. His son and grandson, also named George, continued the business until the early 1990s, mostly wholesale at the end.

The Museum Wish List

One of our current goals is to create a Kitchen Corner with appliances and utensils from years past. We have a good start with an unusual old oil burner stove, often used in the summer as it took less time to heat and cool down. We would be very happy to have a tea kettle, early toaster and other cooking items.

Other items we'd like to have and would be so grateful for if they were donated:

- Small or medium glass display cases/shelves suitable for hanging on the wall.
- Antique flags to add to our collection.
- Small braided or hooked rug to be placed in our "parlor corner" near the tall case clock.

You may see other items in your home, basement, attic or garage that we haven't mentioned but that would be excellent to for supporting our goal of showing life as it was lived in Brentwood. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have a question or want to discuss an idea you might have.

Upcoming Events

July 4: Museum Open House, 10 am – 1:00 pm
Hot dogs, lemonade and watermelon after Parade.

July 18 : Special Tour of 2 Portsmouth Houses
See page 2.

August 1: Museum Open House, 10 am – 1:00 pm