

Newsletter... June 2016

Brentwood Historical Society



The Historical Society's Anniversary Gift to the Town

By this time most of you are aware that Brentwood will observe its 275th Anniversary next year. We celebrate the event of June 26, 1742, when the governor of New Hampshire signed the document that allowed "Brentwood" to break away from Exeter and become a separate parish. The Selectmen have issued a call for volunteers for a committee to plan an appropriate celebration. That committee is coming together under the chairmanship of Lisa Swasey and Amy Wilson. The actual celebration weekend will be in September. We'll hear more from the celebration committee as time goes on.

By this time you are probably also aware that the Historical Society is undertaking, as its Anniversary Gift to the town, a beautifully updated, comprehensive Town History. It's a project whose time has come. The first effort at a town history was published by this organization in 1967 for the town's 225th anniversary, entitled *Brentwood's 225 Years, 1742-1967*. An updated version was printed in 1976 at the time of the United States of America's 200th anniversary. When Brentwood's 250th anniversary came in 1992, the Historical Society published a *Souvenir Booklet* that focused on the 25 years from 1967-1992.

The plan for the new book is four-fold:

- To include the widest, most complete range possible of topics that pertain to the history of the town;
- To draw on the first two books for all pertinent information and accounts;
- To add early events and information that could/should have been included before; and
- To update it with details from the last 25 years.

The Planning Committee includes Rebecca Dunham, editor; Robin Wrighton, designer; Matthew "Sandy" Thomas of Fremont, valued advisor and contributor; Albert "Skip" Belanger, manager of photos, maps, news clippings, etc.; Linda Rousseau, coordinator of writers and resource people; Gary Farnham, storage of the finished books; and Alma Vahey, president of the Historical Society.

Old Photo Day



Alma Vahey, Rebecca Dunham and Albert Belanger look over the Museum's photos and urge you to submit yours for possible use in the new Town History.

You as members of the Historical Society can be some of the best sources of material for the book. The first thing to focus on is **Old Photo Day**. Please search your old photos and news clippings. What would be good candidates for inclusion in the Town History? Bring these items to **Old Photo Day, from 10 am-1 pm Saturday, August 6 at the Historical Society Museum**. Albert "Skip" Belanger, who is organizing the maps and photos, will be ready with a scanner to copy your items so that you can take them safely home again. Photos will be chosen and used according to the space available. Here are the guidelines:

- Old photos of houses that were built *at least 100 years ago*.
- Photos and newspaper articles of "historic value" – prominent citizens, events, gatherings, celebrations, landmarks, even catastrophes. Former businesses – eating places, drive-in theatres, mills, blacksmiths, auto garages, stores, barbershops and the like. We will use details from them to update previous accounts or add information we didn't have.

A limit, please, of 10 photos per person.

As you search your scrapbooks, boxes, attics, whatever, if you have any questions please contact Albert "Skip" Belanger at skipandsandy@comcast.net or by phone at 603-772-5826. Looking forward to seeing you on **Old Photo Day!**

Historical Society Newsletter
June 2016

Another Way to Help with the Town History

Historical Society members can be of immediate help by adding to the Society's files on individual Brentwood families. Many of you have some connection with a family that lived in town for several generations, or still lives here.

Even if you're nowhere near being a genealogy expert, you may know a few tidbits about one or more people in that family. Maybe you'd be willing to communicate with someone who contacts us through our website, asking for information about that family. If this reminds you of some way you could add to our Brentwood Families lore, please email Skip Belanger at skipandsandy@comcast.net.

The Rowe Mill --

Famous for its Carriages and Carriage Parts

An important mill flourished for years on the river bank down from the old Fire House. Robert Rowe and Sons began in 1862, making clapboards, shingles, sash and blinds, and later added wheels, gears, bodies and seats for carriages. Robert Rowe had a circular saw which made a continuous cut, and since it was such a novelty it attracted people from great distances. He had the first clapboard machine and the first planing machine in the state. Mr. Rowe and his sons started the business with employment of one man and later it gave great satisfaction to the father to see twenty-seven hands employed. The brothers continued the business, making as many as 3500 sets of wheels a year besides the seats, gears and wooden parts for all varieties of vehicles of their time.

The Rowe Brothers' mill consisted of a large building for a carriage factory, a dry house, storage building and office -- all built around a driveway in the shape of a horseshoe. A blacksmith shop was behind the buildings near the river bank. ...

This reference appeared in an advertisement: "The Brentwood" is the name given by A.N. Parry and Company, Amesbury, to this season's most fashionable carriage, a cut-under ease-about wagon -- in honor of our town, from which Robert Rowe's Sons furnish Amesbury carriage men with the best to be had in the carriage parts."

From Brentwood's 225 Years, pages 77-78.

Antique & Heirloom Appraisal Day: Saturday, October 1

Our last Appraisal Day was three years ago, and people have been asking for another. Rebecca Davis of Middle Road, one of our members who works at Northeast Auctions, has again agreed to organize a good day for us. The date will be **Saturday, October 1, 10:00 am-1:00 pm at the Museum.**

Rebecca and her cohort Monica Reuss are Certified Appraisers. Rebecca describes herself as a generalist, focusing on paintings, drawings, ceramics, glass, silver, textiles and small decorative art. She will assist in getting a specialist in jewelry. Sorry, they will not work with coins, guns or oriental rugs.

Each appraiser will provide information and an opinion of value in a friendly, welcoming and courteous atmosphere. They will be able to refer to online references when necessary. The fees will be \$5.00 per item, 4 items for \$15.00. Light refreshments will be available at no charge. All proceeds will benefit the Historical Society.

When you're looking for items for Old Photo Day, you may come across other things you have questions about. Come and learn about those pieces you've wondered about for years!

Remembering Norman Wilson

We had missed Norman Wilson's company for fourteen months, since he first experienced his strokes. We heard from his family how valiantly he was working to regain as much as he could. But there came a point when the progress stopped. His son Marc reminded us in the obituary that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died within hours of each other on the Fourth of July, 1826, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On July 4th, 2016, the 240th such observance, Norman R. Wilson, himself a descendant of Adams and patriots who fought in the battles of Massachusetts during the American Revolution, died peacefully at his home at age 88.

He served the Historical Society as president and curator for some time. He was active in writing and editing the Brentwood 250th Anniversary Souvenir Booklet, redesigning the town seal. He was an avid amateur genealogist, producing a splendid history of his own family and helping many others with their searches.

His busy life included careers as a photographer and production manager for several newspapers and a lifetime of playing piano, organ, bass guitar and many other instruments, as well as serving as perpetual handyman in the family compound.

He will always be remembered in the Historical Society.

Historical Society Newsletter
June 2016

Photo Gallery



June 17, 2016: Ramblin' Richard entertained a large audience with World War II popular songs and stories. The Historical Society arranged for the program to be held in the Brentwood Library.



Sneak preview of an Old Photo: the Crawley Falls schoolhouse, early 1900s. No one dreamed it would ever be transformed into the beautiful Mary E. Bartlett Library.



May 2016: Brenda Swasey Flanders and Barbara Swasey-Keir tell Alma Vahey about some of the items they had just donated to the Museum from Joe and Nellie Swasey's estate.



Published by L. G. James. Milk Street Bridge and Carriage Factory of Robert Rowe's Sons. Forwinstown, N. H.

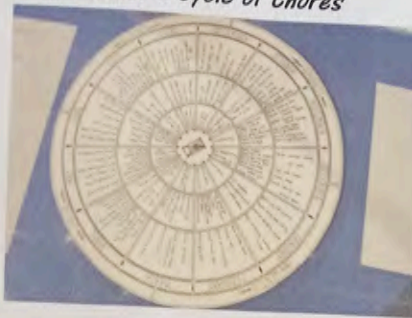
Another sneak preview of an Old Photo: a 1911 view of the carriage factory of Robert Rowe's Sons, right on the river by what is now the Crawley Falls bridge. At that time the road was called Main Street, at least on this postcard. Whatever its name, remember this was the major north-south highway in this part of the state.

This postcard was printed by L. G. James, the owner of the store we now call Lindy's, or the Brentwood Country Store.



Upstairs at the Historical Society Museum, formerly the Grange building. The room is set for a typical Grange meeting, with all the officers' desks and sashes in place.

A Farmer's Cycle of Chores



When members of the Historical Society visited the Museum of New Hampshire History in Concord, we were fascinated by a large circular diagram, meticulously hand-drawn in ink on cardboard. It was one farmer's record of the chores to be done in each month of the year. They were organized in three concentric circular sections. The sections had no headings but with a little study, one could figure that the chores in the largest, outer circle simply had to be done in that month. Those in the two inner sections seemed proportionately less mandatory for that month, but they were still there to be done. Everything revolved around a small central circle, in which the farmer had drawn an hourglass in its wooden frame, with the dots of sand running steadily on.

The chores for July, from the outside in:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. mow hay | 2. repair worn carts |
| rick up hay | fetch wood |
| reap wheat, rye, oats | sell butter/cheese |
| pluck summer hemp | |
| sow second set of ____? | 3. bees swarming |
| cut white peas | weigh new wool |
| crops to barn | |
| fetch green ginger | |
| gather summer wheat in fields | |

The Museum Wish List

Thanks to all who donated items for a Kitchen Corner. As soon as we can clear some space in the third room on the first floor, the Kitchen Corner will be started.

- Other items we'd like to have:
- Small or medium display cases/shelves suitable for hanging on the wall.
 - Book shelves, floor style.

You may see other items in your home, basement, attic or garage that we haven't mentioned but that would be excellent for displays to support 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 have.

Upcoming Events

August 6: Museum Open House and
"OLD PHOTO DAY," 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

October 1: Antique & Heirloom Appraisal Day, 10 – 1

"History is for human self-knowledge ... the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is." R. G. Collingwood