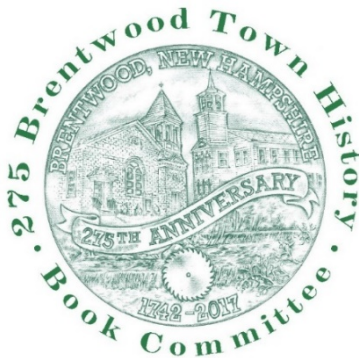


Newsletter... June 2017

Brentwood Historical Society



The Spring and Summer Push



When you see the new book, *Brentwood through the Years*, it will be easy to believe what an intense, searching, high-pressured year it has been for the Brentwood Historical Society.

A year ago at the beginning of June, we were fairly well organized, figuring out what had to be done, who would do what, and calling on people to help with this or that part of it. It wasn't noticeable to the town. The activity took place in the haven of our homes. People hunched over their computers, reached for books, went back and forth through the file drawers at the Museum, leafed through pages and pages of documents, and poured over the hundreds of photographs, news clippings and documents that began to come in.

As time went on, everyone learned what it is to do real research. Information was gleaned from other historical societies, from many sources on the Internet, from the State Archives, from long-time residents, from residents who had moved away, from our churches, our library and other libraries. E-mails appeared on computers at any time of day:

"Can someone tell me the birth and death dates of so-and-so?"

"Can someone identify this house? Where was it located?"

"Who could give me a little more information on the school house at the Poor Farm?"

"We need some material for a sidebar with the Transportation section. Is there an anecdote we can use?"

Now, a year later, the finishing touches are being done. The proof-reading and double-checking are almost at an end. The all-important Index is being developed. Before long we will be holding a beautiful book the size of this Newsletter page. It will have a handsome glossy hard cover and some **600 pages** of stories, articles, lists, recollections, and well over 200 pictures, most of them in color. It will be something you will absolutely want to have. Because all the work has been done by volunteers, the low cost will astonish you. The question now is, when and how can you get it?

One of the best ways would be to reserve a copy now. A form for doing that is included with this Newsletter. That is why this Newsletter is a bit late. We wanted to be sure all the details were settled so we could give you, our members, the earliest opportunity to reserve your books.

Speaking of members, no one is forgetting how many members of the Historical Society contributed photos, documents, information, research, typing, writing and proofreading, to make this the book it has become. It will definitely be what was intended all along – the Historical Society's 275th Anniversary gift to the town. Everyone who has contributed can feel a well-earned sense of pride for a job well done.

Linda Rousseau



Several recent donations are seen in the current exhibit at the Museum: the oriental rug, the wind-up phonograph, which still plays its original, heavy records; and the tall case clock, which still chimes beautifully.

Spotlight on Alma Vahey and her Years as President



Alma Vahey introduces the Certificate of Appreciation before presenting it to Boy Scout Jason Sisk for his Eagle Scout project of building a porch and steps and an outdoor patio in a rear corner of the Museum lawn.

Alma Vahey succeeded Norman Wilson as president of the Historical Society in 2008. Her term in office has been longer than any of the 22 terms that preceded hers since the Society was founded in 1967. At the time she began, the Society was very low in membership. Today it has almost 80 members, who are showing more and more interest in the organization.

Other significant steps and improvements have taken place during her tenure. The middle room on the main floor, dedicated to the memory of Arlene Lyford, has been upgraded from just a storage area to an interesting display room. In the main room, the floor has been painted, giving a cleaner feel to the whole area. Heavy display cases have been rearranged to make more open space in the middle. The Museum's book collection has been assembled on new shelves in a Library Corner. The many photo albums are kept at hand for easy viewing. A comprehensive collection of Brentwood Town Reports has been organized,

dating from 1850 to the present. A complete collection of the *Brentwood Newsletter* has been preserved in archival storage boxes.

Additional file cabinets, shelves, new computer, and printer/scanner have made the office more productive. The purchase of a large screen has added to the program presentations. The latest improvement has been the purchase of 42 new padded folding chairs, which will allow more seating.

The recent years have seen a fundraising campaign for the purchase and installation of an Incinole in the bathroom. The exterior of the building was painted. An accessible ramp was built at the rear side door. An updated survey of the property was made, which clearly determined the boundaries of the Museum lot and allows us to dream and plan for better use of the rear lawn.

Outside, landscaping and ornamental bushes have appeared along the front of the building. The Eagle Scout project mentioned in the photo caption (at left) contributed the outdoor patio, which might be expanded. The Highway Department has helped regularly with mowing, improving the parking area, snow removal, and bringing large stones from the old Crawley Falls bridge, for use as seating around the oak tree in the rear.

Now to mention the treasure of historical items and artifacts that have been added to the Museum collection during Alma's tenure. An 1830s teacher's desk; a large blanket chest with two drawers below; a tall case clock; an early wind-up phonograph with original records; a long handmade workshop bench; barn and workshop tools; early sewing machines; an iron laundry stove with flat iron; early camera collection; early firefighting gear and equipment; fine vintage kitchen equipment; antique toys; antique clothing for children, men and women; historical books, documents and photographs —all are adding depth to the Museum collection.

The officers and members of the Society who have labored and made donations have helped to make Alma's nine years as president a period of important growth and development.

Historical note

Even the fields themselves would occasionally offer up reminders of past owners – an old farrier's file, bricks from the foundation of another house, and most exciting of all, a rare arrowhead.... Each of these markers served notice that this was a place of continuity, linked to the soil.... The Greenleafs' farm was reminiscent of what every farm in Brentwood must have once been like. Theirs was a subsistence farm. They raised everything they needed for themselves, and whatever surplus eggs, milk or cordwood they had was sold for the cash needed to buy those few necessities one couldn't make or grow, and to pay taxes.

Brentwood 250th Anniversary Souvenir book, page 29.

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Several Thousand Years Ago in Brentwood

Albert Belanger has been communicating with Mark Greenly, Past President and Chair of the New Hampshire Archaeological Society Collections Committee. The focus has been on artifacts found at the Pickpocket Dam and Falls. Following is a short summary by Mr. Greenly of a much more detailed report that is in the Historical Society's files.

The excavation of the Pickpocket Falls site by members of the New Hampshire Archeological Society in the 1950s brought to light a range of artifacts: a few from the colonial period or later, but most of Native American origin. Interpreting what these artifacts tell us about the people who visited the site has to be approached with caution. Archeologists rarely find artifacts representing all the activities performed at a site; objects made of organic material (i.e., plants and animals) decay in the acidic soil and leave no trace. Stone artifacts do remain in the soil, though.

The kinds of stone artifacts recovered at this site include a range of tools for obtaining and processing food and other raw materials for the objects and activities of daily life. The excavators in the 1950s could understand what stone tools were used for by their shapes, but they had a limited understanding of their ages and of how Native American artifact styles changed over time. Present day archaeologists have the benefit of 60 more years of excavation, research, and scientific advances. The styles of artifacts from Pickpocket Falls suggest the site was visited intermittently over several thousand years. The earliest artifacts that can be dated by their style are stone spear points used some time between 7,000 and 8,000 years ago. The latest Native American artifacts are pieces of pots made less than 3,000 years ago. It can't be concluded from the artifacts how many times the site was visited. Not every visit would have left evidence that archeologists could find, and there may have been periods of years or even centuries when the site was not visited.

This coincides very well with the recent discovery of a stone ax head on the Pickpocket Road property of Diantha Wade and Kevin Crowley. It has been tentatively dated at 5,000 years old. As you work around your own property, think once in a while of those who walked and worked on your land over the past several thousand years!

A Brentwood Story: How New Hampshire Laid the Foundation for the United Nations

On August 12, 1812, a gathering of distinguished leaders, including the first Governor of New Hampshire, took place in Brentwood. The agenda of the meeting was to establish a new political party to be known as "The Friends of Peace," to establish Resolves that state what principles the party would stand for, and to elect candidates to be sent to the House of Representatives in Washington D.C. Representatives were successfully elected that first year and a letter of protest was sent to the President of the United States calling for peace instead of what they called "Madison's Little War."

Accomplishing this agenda ran late in the day due to interruptions by a crowd of 2000 citizens gathered in Brentwood, who cheered and carried on through the hearing of the text of the letter.

The Friends of Peace political party spread through New Hampshire and spilled over into neighboring states. Credit is due to citizens of the other States who kept the idea growing that nations could settle their differences with words instead of weapons. The party lasted for forty years until 1852. Finally in 1853, international peace conferences were held in different European countries. As countries struggled with the emerging Crimean War, they referred to the plan for peace as the American Plan.

The magnitude of the Friends of Peace echoed through the decades until 1949 with the founding of the United Nations. To this day we struggle to abolish in every region on earth the abhorrence of war. Two hundred and five years later, the dream lives on and it all started here in Brentwood in front of what has become Pilgrim United Church of Christ.

Gene Orcutt

Source Material: Smart, Arthur K., Historical New Hampshire, March 1949

Professor Johnston often said that if you didn't know history, you didn't know anything. You were a leaf that didn't know it was part of a tree.

Michael Crichton, Timeline

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For Members and Friends — Private Tour of Gilman Garrison House



Have you ever wondered what's inside the Gilman Garrison House, which sits quietly across from the old Loaf and Ladle and never seems to be open to the public? We have arranged to have a private guided tour just for members of the Brentwood Historical Society and their friends. **Save the date of Thursday, October 12, 10:30 a.m.** There is a lot to see and hear about this wonderful edifice. The first section was built in 1709, over 300 years ago.

The Gilmans had prosperous sawmills nearby on the banks of the Squamscott River. After 1732 the more elegant right wing was added, making suitable rooms available for important meetings and gatherings. The house passed through several families and was privately owned until 1966, when it was turned over to the Historic New England organization.

As Historical Society members, you will receive more details about the house and the tour closer to the date. If you have questions before then, please contact Linda Rousseau, Program Chair, at lindarou@comcast.net or 772-4534.

Tidbits Old and New

- In the past year an effective alarm system has been functioning in the Museum. We found out how effective when this writer fumbled too long to try to cancel the alarm after unlocking the door. Within minutes a friendly Brentwood Police car was at the scene.
- For several months the Museum building was besieged by squirrels who took up housekeeping and threw their extra nesting material on the floor. They even ate a hole in the paneling. We think we have covered their entry hole. No more activity -- for now.

Brentwood Highway Dept. Middle Road 1993



This priceless photo shows all the town had for a Highway Department for years and years. The sign on the door says "Brentwood Highway Dept." It served as "the salt shed." It was close to the road, on the same site where today's Highway Department buildings were built in 1999.

- In April, the program on colonial tavern life attracted an audience of 45, the largest attendance we've had within memory. We were sorry that some people had to stand. We hope the new chairs will allow for more seating space from now on.

Upcoming Events

September 16-17: Celebration Weekend, Brentwood's 275th Anniversary

October 12: Private tour of Gilman Garrison House in Exeter, 10:30 a.m.

BREAKING NEWS: We need to have a first-class float in the 275th Anniversary Parade on Sept. 17. An 18-foot trailer is being saved for us! We have a basic idea as to how we would do it. If you would like to help plan and/or work on it, contact Linda Rousseau at 603-772-4534 or lindarou@comcast.net.