

Brentwood Historical Society Newsletter Winter 2017-18



Hello to the Members of the Historical Society

Welcome to the winter newsletter of the Brentwood Historical Society. The first thing to do is to update you on the new officers and board of the Society.

The Annual General Meeting took place on Sunday, November 12, 2017, attended by about 25 members. The slate of the Nominating Committee was presented by Robin Wrighton, committee chair. Members of the committee were Albert Belanger, Rebecca Davis, Gary Farnham, Linda Rousseau, and Robin Wrighton. The following officers and directors were elected:

President	Rebecca Dunham
Vice-President	Linda Rousseau
Recording Secretary	Suzanne Austin
Research Correspondent	Albert Belanger
Treasurer	Frank Northrup
Director	Richard Chamberlain
Director	Karen Ellis
Director	Gary Farnham
Director	Robert Gilbert
Director	Phyllis Thompson
Director	Alma Vahey

Becky Dunham, the new president, presented Alma Vahey with a framed Certificate of Appreciation for her nine years of service as president of the Historical Society, and a large bouquet of flowers. Alma had served the longest term of any president since the Society was formed in 1967. The membership gave her a hearty round of applause.

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

All that the Brentwood Historical Society has accomplished this past year is due to the hard work and dedication of so many volunteers, members and town residents. Personally, I learned a great deal about "my" town that I never knew...and hope that in the next few years, many more Brentwood residents will feel the same.

This will be a year of thoughtful reflection on our contribution to Brentwood's 275th --- our book project, preparing a second printing for the summer of 2018, scheduling public programs, and planning for the future. Our collection of historic items continues to expand, and one task this year will be to catalog everything, so that we may utilize pieces in programs and exhibits. A sidebar note: we welcome additions to the collection -- family photos, old and also from recent events -- diaries, letters, and any material mentioning Brentwood. What we do in the present day becomes history -- and we want to be sure to keep updating the material we collect.

We also are planning a "clean-up day" so we can freshen the building, make some repairs and possibly upgrades, and stage new exhibits. Members and friends will be asked to help in whatever way they can.

The membership drive is scheduled for the near future. We hope to expand the roll and continue to educate people about Brentwood's place in history.

Thanks again to all who have helped over the past many years, thanks to all who have been elected to serve on the board, and thanks for the many volunteer hours that all have given.

Museum Wish List

- A snow shovel
- Bag of salt
- Two gallons of grey floor paint
- A ream of copy paper
- Hand sanitizer
- Good scissors

Rebecca Dunham

Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2017-18

The Legend of Brentwood's Four-Ox Bog

This story was passed on to me in August, 2017, by Rita Guarino, of Keene. Rita and Tony Guarino lived with their five children on Pickpocket Road for over 30 years, beginning in the 1970s. She wrote many articles for the Brentwood Newsletter. Her daughter Michelle married John Kareckas, a civil engineer who has worked all over the Seacoast and is deeply interested in New England history. Knowing that the Guarinos had lived in Brentwood, he recently remembered hearing the Legend of the Four-Ox Bog and asked Rita if she had ever heard it. Rita got his permission to pass it on to her friends in Brentwood. Here is the story, in Jack Kareckas' words. – Linda Rousseau.

I was told this story in 1974 by Lawrence Lyford while working with a survey crew on Alice Tonry's subdivision along Middle Road, opposite Prescott Road in Brentwood.

Lawrence happened to be driving by as we were traversing the bog, which is now one of the subdivision access roads [Bartlett Road]. He stopped and inquired, "Do you know you are crossing Four-Ox Bog?" Our party chief at the time, Bob Lessard, who grew up in Exeter, said he hadn't heard the legend.

As Lawrence went on, he explained that on the other side of the bog, not a very long distance, probably 100 feet or so, was one of the finest growing stands of Eastern White Pine in New Hampshire. Back in the day, loggers were setting out to harvest these magnificent trees, which had annual rings about 1/4-inch thick – meaning they really put on some wood every year and grew to tremendous heights.

We were crossing in winter, about the same time of year as the loggers of long ago. I guess they waited until the ground froze to make the crossing with their animals. There tragedy struck. The ground wasn't frozen enough to bear the weight of the oxen. They broke through and wallowed in the muck. Being much younger then, I thought [Lawrence meant] the oxen went in deep, like in quicksand. This was not the case. They went in up to their bellies and were stuck in the mud, not able to go either forward or backward.

Now today, if we have a two-wheel drive and get stuck, [we would think] perhaps a four-wheel drive could pull us out. If we have a four-wheel drive stuck, we would need more like a four-wheel plus a winch to get unstuck. A yoke of oxen was the biggest thing they had, and I guess they tried with another team, which also got stuck. Thus the loggers had to face losing their means of making a living, and could likely have been bank-

rupted, as the cost of oxen replacement may have exceeded their available funds. I don't know the results, as Lawrence only shared the tragedy of the loss of the animals. I can only imagine the overall effect on the families.

Over the years, when traveling Routes 125 or 111-A, I've thought of this tale and viewed it as an isolated case for that particular piece of land. Lately I've been working in Kingston, replacing a road culvert near the North Danville and Fremont town lines. Not familiar with the local terrain along the river through West Brentwood and Fremont, I never extrapolated tree growth toward these areas west of 125. The area along the Exeter River in these towns is one of tremendous White Pine yield and was central to the mast tree selection of the mid-1700s for the King's Navy.

There are historic markers in Fremont along Route 107 calling attention to the Mast Tree Riot where the locals, dressed as Indians, stood up to the Royal Surveyor and crew, who were trying to sequester the larger trees and logs. It was this marker, and the residual pines, which brought back the memory of Lawrence Lyford's tale of the four oxen lost.



It may be that the scene looked very much like this on the day the four oxen were lost. The white area by the trees is ice covered water, which extends into the trees free of ice.

Home-Baked items for Election Day Bake Sale

The Historical Society will be in charge of the Bake Sale table at the Community Center on Election Day, Tuesday, March 13 from 8 a.m. until sellout. Home-baked goods from members and friends would be very welcome. You may bring them the day before to Becky Dunham's house, 9 Block Dr., or first thing Tuesday morning to the Community Center. If you have questions please call Becky, 642-3912.

Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2017-18

Update on the New Town History

The Historical Society's new best-seller, *Brentwood, New Hampshire Through the Years, 1742-2017*, is completely sold out. We are planning a second printing in the coming summer. We are also maintaining a waiting list, for those who want to be sure they get a copy when the books are ready. For more information, please contact Becky Dunham, 642-3912 or president@brentwoodnhhistory.org.

Tip from the NH Preservation Alliance

Managing Bats in Your Living Space

This fall and winter, arm yourself with the best strategies for managing bats in living spaces, barns, and attics. Bug-eating bats are important to a healthy environment, and many people have a few bats in their attic and never know it. However, a large colony can become a nuisance, and bats should be kept out of interior living quarters. Now is a good time to seal up entry points and clean up bat droppings, as New Hampshire's eight species of bats migrate south or hibernate in the colder months.

First, a few facts about bats. These small flying mammals can eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes per hour and will eat their body weight in bugs in a single evening. Bats are nocturnal, so it is best to try to vacate them in the evening. Bats can see during the day, but their activity is highly limited. Bats must drop from a high spot in order to fly. They cannot lift off from the ground. If trying to remove a bat that is on the floor, give the animal time to climb up and gain height before expecting it to fly out!

A bat loose in your living space: Take a deep breath, put on some gloves, and remind yourself that the bat wants to get out. Never touch a bat with your bare hands. Open a window, turn off inside lights, turn on the outside lights and close interior doors to prevent the bat from moving to another living space. Usually within 20 minutes or so the bat will find its way out. Do not use a broom or tennis racket to assist! In the fall or winter, the big brown bat is the one local species that, at times, hibernates in buildings. One may awake to look for a snack and surprise you. In colder months, try to release a trapped bat during a warm time of day if possible.

Preventing their return to your attic: Mothballs hung in an old stocking or bright lights can be deterrents, but the best strategy is blocking access. Chimneys, cracks or holes in the siding or soffits, or just about any place where materials have moved apart, invites bats to enter and make themselves at home. If you don't know where they are getting in, watch for their movements in and out of your house in the summertime at dusk.

Relocating the bats: If you evict bats, they need somewhere to go. Consider installing a bat house on your property. The boxes are varied shapes and look like big birdhouses.

Cleaning up after bats: Bat Manure, or guano, can contain a fungus that can sometimes cause a respiratory infection in humans, so proper precautions are necessary. In a barn or space that is hard to close up, owners might need to come up with a strategy for managing guano instead of removing it. Some barn owners tarp a large section of equipment or insert a tarped "ceiling" that can be removed and cleaned periodically.

Thanks to the N.H. Fish and Game Department and Preservation Alliance members for information about this article. More on all aspects of bat management: batworld (<https://batworld.org/>) Fish and Game -- (<http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/nongame/bats-home-owners.html>) .

A Halloween P.S.: Bats are nocturnal creatures, so it's natural that a celebration about the end of the light seasons and the beginning of the dark ones would incorporate them. Also, in the old days Halloween meant big bonfires, which draw mosquitoes and moths, which in turn draw bats, so bats were likely a common sight during the early Samhain festivals and later Halloween celebrations.

Eugene E. Orcutt

Gene Orcutt had a good seat and enjoyed the day at the 275th Anniversary parade in September. A Brentwood resident for 30 years, he died at age 89 on December 6, 2017. He was an avid historian. His special forte was his treasure trove of short, pithy historical anecdotes which animated many talks and discussions. His presence at Historical Society events will be sincerely missed.



Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2017-18



The 275th Anniversary Float

The float passed by the parade watchers too quickly for them to decide why each of the various items had been chosen for display. Here, for posterity's sake, are the details.

Theme: *Brentwood, New Hampshire Through the Years, 1742-2017* – the new book made its debut that weekend.

Large round town seal on the front wall of the float: the waterfalls refer to the important power source for all the early mills; the large circular iron saw blade represents the later industries, including the famous Rowe Bros. carriage parts factory.

Every item on the float was selected from the Museum's collection of Brentwood artifacts. Included were an apple cider press, a corn husker, a hand-cranked stone scissors sharpener, a wash tub with unusual wooden washing cradle, a small iron laundry stove for keeping the flat irons heated, and a folding rack for drying clothes.

Bushel of potatoes: reminder of the large crops of potatoes that were grown here. **Other farm mementos:** large scythe and bale of hay, tall oil lantern, a two-man saw and a large hand-squared pine log, metal milk jug, a two-hole outhouse seat, a hand-cranked meat grinder. From the 40s and 50s, a square box Brownie camera and a dial telephone (which always amazes today's children.)

The big hit with the parade watchers were Robin Wrighton's two Lakenvelder chickens, with a big basket of eggs, recalling the town-wide chicken and egg industry that supported the town through the Depression and World War II.

Fluttering at the back end were two flags, the British Union Jack and the American Stars and Stripes, representing the two governments that claimed Brentwood's allegiance: England, 1742-1783 and America, 1783-present.

Duane Demeritt loaned his excellent 18-ft. flatbed, gave invaluable assistance in assembling the float, and finally, the perfect nylon tent to protect it from a rainstorm the night before. Doug Cowie loaned his tractor, got the necessary permissions, and drove in the parade. In period dress were Linda Cowie as a hat maker, Laurel Abusamra working at the wash tub, and Linda Rousseau plying her knitting. David Abusamra recorded the weekend with a valuable collection of photographs.



Brentwood Historical Society Museum, 140 Crawley Falls Rd
Rebecca Dunham, President, 642-3912.

Mailing Address: 1 Dalton Road, Brentwood, NH 03833.
Website: www.brentwoodnhhistory.org.