



Washington Historical Society Newsletter

FALL2007 EDITION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Autumn has brought the usual changes...of tree leaves, temperatures and daylight to standard times.

The final meeting of the year was again the November "Mystery Meeting" ably overseen as usual by Richard Crane. Our meetings in 2007 covered a wide range of topics from Native History and Songs of Old New Hampshire to ratification of the US Constitution and presentations about the Pierce family and Contoocook River. The year began with engaging programs by Gwen Gaskell and Bobby Fraser on areas of their expertise. Your attendance was much appreciated by all.

We successfully completed a museum exhibit on World War II, which we will enlarge and continue in 2008 when we hope to entertain more local school groups.

The repairs to the museum's foundation were funded with the help of several voluntary contributions for which we are most grateful. A number of improvements in the barn also occurred with the help of several generous members and several members helped to repaint one side of the schoolhouse in September.

In addition to dues and donations, Society fundraisers this year included the July 4th Flea Market, the Wool Days Cafe and the Barn Dance held at the Rhoades Alpaca Farm. The labor for each was offset by the good will and pleasant attitude of all our volunteers, all of which is appreciated and necessary for an organization such as ours.

Attendance at the museum, barn and school were at record numbers. To all who volunteered at those sites we send our thanks.

As we begin our "Silver Anniversary" year, Jim Crandall is at work planning the presentations, which will run from April through November as usual on the second Monday of each month. We look forward to seeing each of you then for what we anticipate will be an instructive and entertaining series of meetings.

Sincerely,
Bob Evans
President, Washington Historical Society

A TALE OF TWO OLIVES (OR TWO OLIVES TOO CONFUSING FOR SCHOOL HOUSE NO. 2)

By Tom Talpey

In the mid 1800s Half Moon Pond Road used to be the main route from Washington to Bradford, through what was called the Mountain District. Along this road, about four miles from Washington Center, stood the District No. 2 School, a one room school house known as the Mountain School. An excellent summary of the life of this school is given in Ron and Grace Jagers' book, *Portrait of a Hill Town*, beginning on page 102.

Some records from this school exist in the Town Archives, giving the names and ages of the students. The teacher for the school term from May 24 to July 16, 1858 was Sarah Eglantine (Eggie) Crain, who was paid \$5 (probably plus room and board) for the term. Her record book shows that the class consisted of 12 girls and 5 boys, ranging in age from 4 to 12 years old, seven of whom were named Crain or Crane. Different families spelled it differently in those days, although they all were related. Among the names listed are Olive A. Crane and Olive R. Crain, aged 6 years and 9 months, and 6 years and 7 months, respectively. When I first saw this it occurred to me that it must have been confusing at times for the teacher to have two little girls with the same name and approximately the same age in her classroom.

A little work with the 1886 publication *History of the Town of Washington* revealed that Olive A., born 8/30/1851, was the daughter of Amariah and Susan Crane. But Olive R. could not be found! Study of succeeding teachers' records in our town archives revealed that the two Olives both continued attending that school through 1860. In the Spring term of that year a new Crain appeared, named Rose E., but interestingly with a blank attendance record. The following term, beginning October 15, 1860, was taught by Sabrina E. Crain, who was now paid \$12 for the term and had 13 students in her class, ranging in ages from 5 to 18, only two of whom were not named Crain or Crane! The student roster lists Rose E. and Olive A., but no Olive R. Subsequent teachers' records show no further mention of Olive R. through December of 1861. The light begins to dawn -- Olive R. must have changed her name to Rose E., at least as far as the school records were concerned! Checking the ages in the teachers' records confirms that Rose E. and Olive R. must have been the same person. The old *Town History* book lists a daughter named Rose E. for Henry and Hannah Crain, born 9/21/1858, less than a month after Olive A. Crane. Who knows why the name was changed? Perhaps it became too confusing for the little girls and their parents as well as for the teachers and other children!

But the mystery deepens. Further study of the later records of School No. 2 reveals that in the Spring of 1862 Olive R. is back, but Olive A. now has gone missing! Suspecting that her family had moved, I checked the teachers' registers for the other schools in town and found that Olive A., along with her older sister and younger brother, were attending the No. 5 District School in East Washington during that term. Olive R. continues as a student at School No. 2, however, sometimes recorded as Olive R. and a couple of times as Rosemy O. (could this be a contraction of Rose Emily?) Finally, in June of 1866, when she was 14 years old, and three years after her father had died in the Civil War, she was listed as O. Rose, after which she disappeared from the Washington school rosters.. Her name seemed to change at the whim of the teacher!

According to the 1886 History of the Town of Washington, Olive A. married Hale C. Craig in 1877 and lived in Washington at the time the book was published. She died in April, 1928, less than a month after her husband, and they are both buried in the East Washington Cemetery. Rose E. (Olive R.) married Willis Dinsmore of Peterborough in 1870. She is listed in the 1870 census as working in a cotton mill there. Willis died shortly afterward (in 1873) and Rose was subsequently married to Joseph Sennott of Newport in 1879. At this point the genealogy becomes REALLY confusing, as it appears that this was the second marriage of Joseph Sennott and, remarkably, his first wife was also named Rose E. (last name Ring)! What an odd coincidence that a man would have two wives with not only the same first name but also the same middle initial! (The second wife was 10 years younger than the first.) Rose E. (Crain, Dinsmore) Sennott died at age 53 on April 29, 1905, and is buried in the Northville Cemetery in Newport.

[I am indebted to Kathy Gilbert, who lives in New Jersey and is writing a genealogy of the Farnsworth family, for tracking down this information for me. Kathy is an outstandingly skillful and resourceful genealogist who visited our museum several years ago while working on the Farnsworth history. She has been an invaluable aid to us several times since.]

The next question is: Where did these two little girls and their families live when they attended the No. 2 School? During this past summer I had the privilege of accompanying Stephen A. Crain of Windham, Maine, one of our long-time members, on a hike with his daughter and several other family members to the site of Henry Crain's homestead along Half Moon Pond Road. Steve is a great-great-grandson of Henry and wrote a poignant article in our Spring 2005 Newsletter about Henry's service and death in the Civil War.

On an 1860 map hanging in our museum the location of Henry Crain's house is clearly marked and Steve had visited it before. Next to the cellar hole where the house had stood there is the remnant of an old raspberry patch, from which we picked a few late fruits and enjoyed some of Henry's raspberries! It is perhaps a half a mile north of where the school would have been at the time, across the road from what is now known as the Max Israel Tract, and is now a part of the Pillsbury State Forest. According to the Jagers' book, the schoolhouse itself was moved south about a half a mile (near the beginning of the 20th century) to the junction of Mountain Road and Half Moon Pond Road and still exists, refurbished today as a summer camp. Just south of the original location of the school there is also a farm indicated on the 1860 map as belonging to M. D. Proctor. Mr. Proctor died in July of 1845 and a year and a half later his widow, Lucy, married Solomon Crane, a second marriage for both of them. Amariah was Solomon's son by his first wife. Solomon died in 1858, leaving Lucy as a widow for the second time. It's a good bet that in the early 1860s Amariah and his family were living with his step-mother on the widow Proctor's farm just south of the school house.

The end of my tale is that, although we may never know for certain why, one of the Olives turned out to be a Rose!

MUSEUM REPORT

By Gwen Gaskell

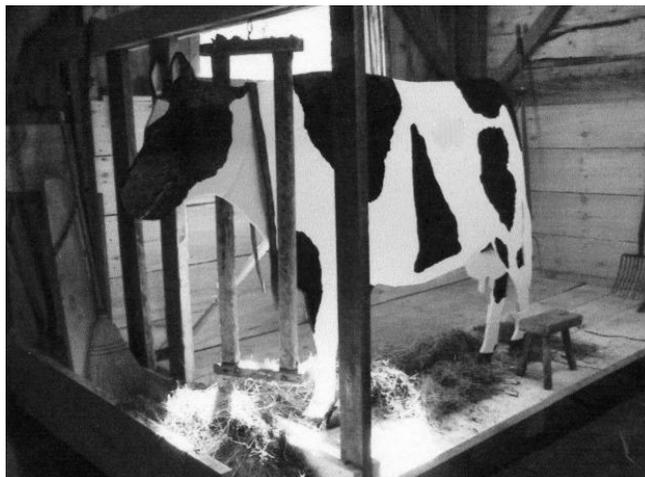
The World War II display is being held over for another season.

The museum was busy most of the time it was open this summer, due to the interest in the World War II display and additional items were given or loaned to us throughout the season, so those seeing it early in the summer missed some of the items. We hope groups from some of the area schools will come in the spring with more publicity. Do plan to visit and if you are unable to make it at a regularly scheduled time, you are welcome to make an appointment for any time that would work for you. We also feel that the Ken Burns series on Public TV about the War may have created some added interest. Pam and Brian Vaillancourt donated to our "new acquisitions display" this fall a small page of paper found in the walls of the Chase Farm house during

remodeling some time ago. It is the original copy of a "Selectman's Oath", dated 1840, signed by the three selectmen then sitting and witnessed by Martin Chase, who was the Town Clerk at the time. Why it turned up the wall of this house is anyone's guess. A check of the Town Archives revealed an identical copy recorded in the Town Clerk's book for 1840. The foundation project at the rear of the building was very involved but we feel that a good job was done and we received enough donations to make it possible to go ahead and plan to make a nice sunny room at the back of the basement, which can be turned into an office for the archives area. This is still being worked on, but by spring work should be completed on all of that area. The Museum Committee sincerely appreciates the volunteers who helped as hosts at the museum this past summer and we look forward to your assistance again in the future. We are happy to report that Charlotte Treadwell has mostly recovered from the injuries she received in an auto accident, which kept her out of commission this past summer. We will be glad to have her with us again next summer. The Old District #5 School House in East Washington received a new coat of paint on the road side and looks wonderful. Many THANKS to those who spent a day or two working hard with scrapers and paint brushes to protect the school building.



Believe it or not, there was a taker for this ten-ton block of concrete, which had been a part of the original steps to our museum. It had to be removed because it was exerting pressure on the basement wall, causing it to bow and crack. Phil Barker and Bob Evans pondering on how to get rid of it.



"Martha" Washington, the NH cow in her stanchion in the basement of our barn. She was one of the many new additions this summer and we anticipate that next summer she may be accompanied by a calf! Check our Spring 2008 Newsletter or stop in and see for yourself next year.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Thursday, the 13th of December, 2007, is the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the Articles of Incorporation of our organization. There were 55 Charter Members. As far as we can determine, between 25 and 27 of our Charter Members are no longer living and eleven of the original charter signers continue with us today as dues-paying or honorary members. Our charter is on file in Concord with the NH Department of State, Records of Voluntary Corporations, Vol. 1090, page 177.

RECOLLECTIONS OF RICHARD CRANE

Automobile & Truck Inspections

(subtitled "New Hampshire Ingenuity")

Back in the 1930s and early 1940s when State inspection time came, I remember when a group of farmers with Model A Fords would get together at the farm before going to the inspection garage to go over their vehicles for so-called "possible violations" such as cracked or broken windows, broken tail-lights, missing mirrors or side windows, not to mention bald tires, etc.

As all Model A Fords were so much alike, if a part wasn't available from an old junker, the one with the best chance of passing inspection went to the garage first, got a sticker for passing the test and then went back to the farm. The missing or broken parts on the next Ford were then replaced with the good ones from the previously inspected vehicle, and so on, until all the Fords passed the test. This saved a lot of money in "tight" times in the "Good Ole Days."

Thanksgiving Dinner

Years ago, when the Crane family lived on East Washington Road at the little "Red House" on the Town side of the Eccard Farm, things were tight and Thanksgiving was coming. There was not going to be a turkey to feed the family of 2 adults and 9 children. It was decided to have the big red rooster for the Thanksgiving dinner. The children ran to the hen house to get the rooster and somehow he got away from them and flew to the top of a tall maple tree nearby, of course refusing to come down. They were all thinking that they had lost their chance for a good dinner, until Roscoe took his brother Nat's 38-55 rifle and with one shot, down came the headless rooster. They all had a wonderful Thanksgiving after all.

P.S.-- Roscoe, my father, was a good marksman and hunter who taught me how to shoot when I was young. In the years 1948-49 I was a member of the University of New Hampshire ROTC Rifle Team. Today, my eyes are poor and I don't think I could hit the broad side of a barn!

Old Time Husking Bee

Thinking back to the 1940s after Pumpkin Time came harvesting of the field corn, where the ears would be stripped from the stalks and then husked to be taken to the grist mill. An Old Time Husking Bee would be organized. I remember some festivals held at Perley Crane's in Washington, at Elmer "Dimp" (because he had dimples) Crane's Stowe View Farm on Stowe Mt. Road and at Nat and Roscoe's Elm Farm, which was across the road from the GTE Osram-Sylvania plant in Hillsboro.

For those too young to remember, a husking bee was held to husk the ears of corn before it was taken to the grist mill to be ground into corn cob meal to feed the livestock during the coming winter months. The rest of the corn plants and husks were fed to the sheep and other animals. To hold a husking bee, friends and neighbors gathered to help each other husk the corn, much the way they did in the old days for house and barn raisings, cutting fields, quilting, or other tedious chores.

Bees bring folks out to Visit, Eat, Dance and Have a Jolly Good Time. One of the original rules of the Bee was to give those finding a solid red ear the privilege of kissing anyone of the opposite sex they wanted. This got to be an exciting moment, as the shy country girls made sure they wore extra thick lipstick to mark their victim and the boys and men often grew whiskers for protection before the husking bee. Often times the girls ran outside or out of sight, perhaps to try to avoid embarrassment, or as I thought, to get more than one kiss.

Here's a thought -- why not hold a "husking bee" like in the good old days, as a money maker for the Historical Society? If the author of this article can find the old variety of corn, with its solid yellow and occasional red ears, he would be glad to furnish the corn for the bee, with a little help. In the old days, after husking the corn a delicious meal was served, followed by a square dance and games for all ages.

Pumpkins, potatoes, squash and other produce could be for sale too. What do you say? Let us know of your interest and willingness to help. Please contact Richard Crane at 478-5723, or any Barn Committee member or officer of the Historical Society, names and numbers listed on the back of the Newsletter.



The Newman Brothers, all of them born in Washington, children of Joseph & Pamela Newman. Joseph is referred to in the 1886 History of Washington as "the first settler on the farm on the turnpike on land now owned by Hiram I. Hoyt." Today this property is known as the Chase Farm.

Copy of a remarkable old photograph in the collection of Tom & Valerie Britton, direct descendants of George Newman. Dates added. Used with permission.

Back Row, left to right -- Joseph (1826-1888), Solon (1832-1904), George (1819-1891), DeWitt (1828-1908)

Sitting, left to right -- Theron (1821-1889), James (1818-1884), Hiram (1835-1918), Harris (1814-1876)

George was Nellie's father. (See Nellie's diary at in our spring 2004 newsletter).

Solon started the photographic studio in Hillsborough which eventually became Manahan's then Cy Phelps Photo.

Date of photograph unknown, but estimated to be between 1860 and 1876. It must have been taken for some major event, such as a wedding or perhaps a brotherly beard growing contest. It is doubtful that it was for a corn husking bee, like the ones mentioned in Richard Crane's RECOLLECTIONS in this issue!



Myrtle Merrill, visiting with Jim Gaskell at the Historical Society barn this summer, presented a plaque honoring her father, Perley Crane, for his many years of civic service to the community. It was accompanied by a generous donation to help with our barn and museum restoration work. Perley was the father of nine children: Clayton, Alice, Myrtle, Glendon, Doris, Robert, Mildred, Donald and Jean.

Quoting from the plaque: Perley Harrison Crane, Born in Washington, March 1, 1889, Died in Washington, May 19, 1968, Well-known for his Maple Sugar business, Town Moderator for 14 years, Selectman, Road Agent, Checklist Supervisor, Member of the Committee that brought electricity to Washington in 1938, Member of the School Board, School District Moderator for 35 years, Clerk and Treasurer of the Fire Department, Attended 59 consecutive town meetings, Served on town's 150th Anniversary Celebration Committee, County Delegate 10 years, State Legislator one term, Past Master of Lovell Grange, Past President of the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association.