

## Washington Historical Society Newsletter

FALL 2005 EDITION

### President's Message

A Date to remember: November 26th from 9 AM to 2 PM - Christmas Craft Fair at Camp Morgan Lodge.

This has been a significant year for the Washington Historical Society and I am pleased to report to you, our members and friends, about some of our accomplishments.

We have acquired additional displays for the Museum and Barn, and work continues on both buildings.

Thank you to those who made monetary donations. Every donation helps, no matter how small. The Museum's rain gutters were replaced prior to the heavy downpours of October, a new sign was acquired and relocated, and several enlightening presentations were delivered by speakers at our public meetings.

A special thanks to those folks who managed to take time for work on our committees. And, to all of you who spent precious summer hours at the Museum and School House #5, cleaning, setting up the displays, greeting folks and giving historical information to our visitors, and helping with the monthly dinners and meetings, I would like to personally thank you. Without you, the doors would be locked. On that note, our volunteers who have worked year after year need a break. We need more help during our summer season! It is a rewarding experience to meet and greet newcomers and those who have visited in the past. Please give it a try, it is very rewarding... only a few hours out of your month would help, and your summer visitors might glean a little insight into the wonderland of New Hampshire!

Regarding some of those to be recognized for years of duty, from the purchase of the museum to the wonderful historical data that has been collected, we are proud to have presented Honorary Memberships to: Gwen and Jim Gaskell, Richard Crane, and Tom and Betty Talpey. Richard Crane's wife, Rachael, is also in our thoughts for being by his side. Their years of dedication, taking on personal and financial responsibilities far above and beyond their calling, and their love of the community have truly been appreciated. If not for these wonderful people, I doubt if the Society would have acquired and restored the Barn, Schoolhouse #5, and especially our Museum.

Thank you again for support well needed,

Charlene (Charley) Eastman  
President, Washington Historical Society

## **Progress at the Barn**

*By Richard Crane*

The clapboard project got underway once the rough sawn native white pine clapboards arrived at Crane's old auction barn from Maine where we were able to purchase them at a very reasonable price. The clapboards had to be dried, sized to 6 inches and defects removed. When that was done some 8000 linear feet were painted, using 40 gallons of barn red stain. Once the boards were painted and dry they were transported to the museum barn.

We thank the Historical Society members and non-members alike, who gave so generously of their time and talents.

Windows were reframed, all broken glass was replaced windows were re-glazed and painted. This was a great project for those awfully hot days. The windows even got washed!

Now we were ready to put on clapboards as soon as the old ones were removed and some trim boards were put on. They were applied over a sheathing of 15 lb. felt paper using 13/4" galvanized ring nails.

Volunteers have completed two sides of the barn and the high back end up as far as they care to go. Presently we are expecting Richard Thompson and his crew to come and finish that end which is some 40 feet high.

Phil Barker has paneled the walls of the "old fashioned kitchen" with wide boards and it looks great. This will be on display next summer along with other displays at the museum and barn. A large, 11 x 9 foot, door has been built and hung at the rear of the barn. Now to build a small section of foundation wall and the barn will be tight for the winter. Next year's big projects are to have the front of the barn power washed and the entire barn stained, with joints and cracks caulked. We will repair or replace the front door as well as work on the exhibits.

We expect to have some 3000 linear feet of unpainted clapboards to sell at the end of this project. If interested in buying at 60 cents per linear foot, let Jim or Richard know.
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## **TALES FROM THE PAST**

*Portrait of Another Washington Legend By Richard Crane*

"Bert" Craig was born who knows where, but he spent much of his adult life in Washington and Hillsborough. He and his wife lived in East Washington where Arline and Dave France now live.

Bert was the type of person who becomes the butt of many jokes concerning what he said and did. Later on in his life he became afflicted with what may have been Parkinson's disease, and it is said that he ate Jell-O with his fingers, being unable to keep it on a spoon.



I got to know Bert when he and his wife, whom Bert called his "Old Woman," lived for a few winters at my father's farm, known as the Tryon Farm, where Roger and Bets Crane now live. Bert took care of the cattle and sheep for my dad, Roscoe Crane.

Our flock of sheep had an old buck that was "Boss" of the flock and all else that was around the barnyard. The buck apparently didn't like Bert so one day the ram butted Bert into a snow bank. Bert said he took a 2"x4" and taught that old buck a thing or two. Roscoe told Bert he'd better still keep an eye on the buck, however. Sure enough, one morning my father and I arrived at the Farm just in time to see Bert coming out of the barnyard, soaking wet! The old buck had sneaked up on him as he was taking ice out of the watering tub, and needless to say, Bert didn't see him coming. The buck hit Bert from behind and knocked him right into the big tub of ice water. Bert really had a reason for shaking that morning!

When Bert was young and in school, the teacher asked if anyone knew what a Tomahawk was. Bert got up, swung his arms to the sky and said "It's a big bird in the sky that circles over the Old Woman's chicken yard, then swoops down and steals one of the chickens."

One Halloween morning Bert found his buggy wagon sitting on the ridgepole of the barn, where the local spooks and goblins had placed it during the night. He assumed that his buddy Homer Piper was to blame for the mischief, so the next time that Homer drove by in his Model T touring car, Bert shot at the car with his trusty old double-barreled shotgun. However, he luckily missed the target, so the story goes.

Some time after that, Bert got a Model T himself. Like most folks, Bert had a hard time switching from driving horses to driving a car. One day Bert drove home and right into the garage, hollering all the way "Whoa! Whoa! Stop. Damn you. Whoa!" The car didn't "Whoa" and went right out through the back of the building.

For some reason, later in his life, Bert and his wife, Luella, moved to a little old schoolhouse just up the road from Sandy and Larry Poole's house. (The building is no longer there.) Bert and his wife needed a new outhouse, so he got the Fowlers to help him build it. Not knowing what size hole to cut in the seat, Bert got his "Old Woman" to sit down on the bench so he could mark out the hole around her. No doubt this became the first custom-made outhouse seat in East Washington, if not the only one!

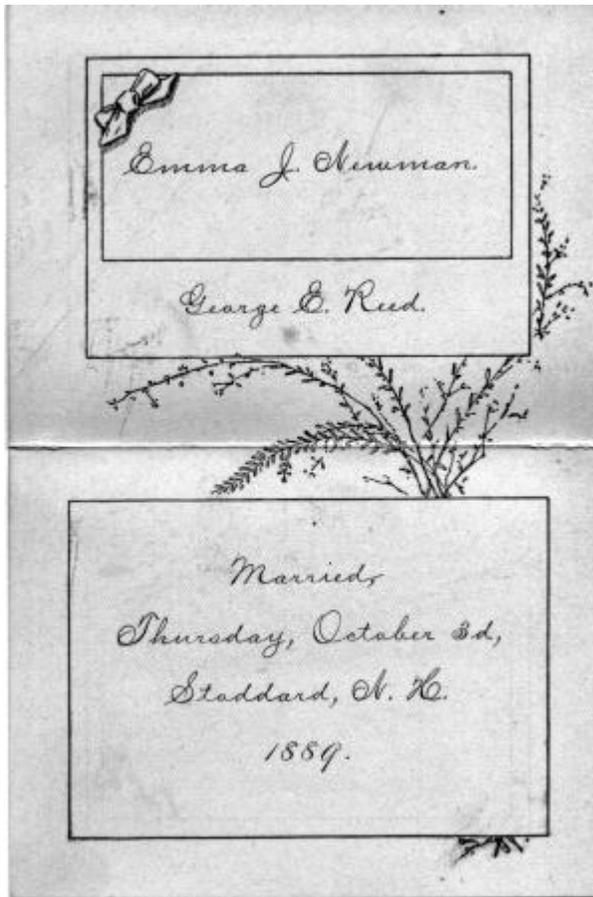
When someone asked Bert how his "Old Woman" was, he would say "She's good, but kind of lame in one hind leg."

These are just a few of the stories I know about Bert. He was a simple and kind-hearted man and I take pleasure in having known him.

## **Whatever Happened to Emma?**

*By Tom Talpey*

Some of our readers may recall the Spring 2004 issue of this Newsletter, where Charlene Cobb reported on the 1869 diary of a teenage girl who grew up in Washington -- the so-called "Nellie's Diary" donated to the Museum by Jerry Johnson, who found it in an antique mall in Florida. One of the mysteries posed after reading this diary was what became of Nellie Newman's older sister, Emma. Based on a hint in an old Lyceum paper in our collection, it was conjectured that she moved to Stoddard, but the details remained unknown. Until this summer!



In July the Museum had a visitor, Kathy Gilbert, who was working on a genealogy involving the Farnsworth family and came to see what she could find in our collection and to visit some of the Farnsworth sites around town. I was tending the Museum at the time and became really impressed with her skills. After a very interesting afternoon, just as she was leaving and mostly on a hunch, I asked her how we might go about finding what happened to Emma. Several days later, in an e-mail, I had my answer. Using census data and a website for ancestor tracing, she had found that Emma had married George E. Reed of Stoddard in 1889 and was living there in 1910 with George, two female children and her husband's mother. Furthermore, Kathy put me in touch with Brad Potts, who has worked on the genealogy of the Page/Reed/Jenkins families of Stoddard. He very kindly sent me a copy of a hand-written wedding announcement of Emma's wedding that had been passed down through the Reed family.

Brad also gave me references to the Stoddard Vital Records, giving dates of the children's births and deaths and burial information for George and Emma. Emma Newman married George Reed when she was 39, just short of her 40th birthday and they lived on a farm in western Stoddard, near the Marlow line. They had two daughters: Cora Bernice, b. 16 Oct. 1890, and Ella May, b. 1 April 1893. The girls inherited the property on the death of their father in 1922 and the Cheshire County records indicate that they were both living in Connecticut under their married names, Cora B. Britton and Ellen Reed Mosher (both widows), when they subsequently sold the farm, in 1983. They would both have been in their 90's. The Stoddard Vital Records indicate that George, who died 9 May 1922, and Emma, who died 4 June 1916, are both buried in Marlow. However, a visit to the graveyard in Marlow revealed that, although George had bought a lot in the cemetery with perpetual care, there are no gravestones on the plot. Furthermore, an inquiry to the sexton elicited the response that there are no bodies buried on the plot. It is possible that they may have been buried in a family graveyard somewhere on the farm.

## Washington Congregational Church 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*This summer the Washington Congregational Church celebrated its 225th Anniversary. An interesting book of its history was written by Ronald and Grace Jager, which is available through the church. Gwen Gaskell was asked to write some notes covering the time when not many records were kept, and compiled the following article, a few parts of which were used in the book. We thought her complete article would add to the history in our archives and might be of interest to others.*



73	Church Membership Today
89	Age of oldest member, Abner Barker
11 A.M.	Winter Services - everyone welcome!

### The Washington Church in the 1940's and Later

*By Gwen Gaskell*

As I grew up in Washington there were church services in the summer time when retired or vacationing ministers would fill the pulpit. Rev. Palmer vacationed on Millen Pond and Rev. Madsen and Rev. Halverson both summered on Faxon hill and often served the church while they were here. Rev. Duke served here and in Bradford and my parents were married by him. I'm sure there were others whom I do not remember.

My dad, Abner Barker, Earl Cilley and Doris Tucker seemed to be the people who held the church together as far as the physical structure. Dad and Earl would do the fixing of broken windows, due to stray baseballs, or touch up some paint. Doris was the treasurer who paid what had to be paid.

In 1949 and 1950, I, as well as other young people of the town was impressed and pleased, when the church had young, newly married ministers come for the summer from Andover Newton Theological School. They lived in the little house on the corner of Cross Street, which my Dad, had built as his first home. At that time it was only half the size it is now.

Richard and Maureen Utley and Paul and Virginia Gettinger were the young couples and they held vacation Bible School, organized picnics and took the children on hikes. One was up Mt. Monadnock, which I have always remembered. It seemed that they had as much fun as we did.

It must have been the pleasant people of Washington, fun with the children and the little honeymoon home, which they occupied, that had something to do with the fact that each couple left Washington at the end of summer expecting their first child!

It was about this time that Ruth Otterson became interested in starting a choir. Doris Tucker played the organ and she and Ruth often sang duets. Choir robes were made of plain white cotton. My mom, Marjorie Barker, Ruth, Doris and probably Bertha Otterson and Ellena Rolfe got together a few evenings at our house and cut out and sewed the robes which had Angel wing type sleeves with a gathered front and back sewn onto a round yolk. They were made in various lengths for the children in the choir. On Sunday morning after taking the cows to pasture I would pick flowers, or weeds, and take my bouquet proudly to church and arrange it for the morning service. My mom told me I'd better be careful or I would have everyone sneezing from goldenrod.

Rev. Walter Swank served the Smith Memorial Church in Hillsboro and also came to Washington for a time during the early 50s. In the winter some of us would go to Hillsboro to Sunday school. Later Rev. Paul Gagne also served both churches. During the 50's with these ministers, services were held in the winter in the upstairs room heated with a gas stove and six to a dozen in the congregation. I cleaned the church in the spring when summer services were about to begin, as no one else seemed to have time.

Camp Morgan (when it was the Worcester, Mass. Y.M.C.A.) always took the responsibility for one service during the summer. It was very impressive to see the older boys walk into town from the camp; the younger ones would be given a ride in a stake body truck. They were all dressed in white pants and shirts and Hank, the Indian Chief Red Eagle, would come with his full headdress, which was beautiful. They would make a formation on the common then march into the church while some member of camp played the chimes. Their hymnals (which are now owned by the Washington Historical Society) would be used for the service, and the camp chaplain and counselors would conduct the service.

The church existed in this fashion until about 1970 when Jim and I came back to Washington and Jim announced to me that "the church had to become an active part of the community so that all 3 beautiful buildings would be in use". A retired minister was found in Newport who would come down to serve us during the summer. We also found Chester Sillars in Henniker who came to Washington for a season or two. We talked to friends and people who took part in the church during the summer and soon a group was meeting in various homes on Sunday evenings to sing and worship, Robert and Julie Dunton, Rollie and Nellie Melzard, Buffy Morrison, Herb and Katherine Killam, Mabel Kimmel and occasionally others would join us. Soon Joyce Borey and Shirley Brown started a Sunday school, and it wasn't long before the Killams were helping and the upstairs room was over flowing. During the start of Sunday school Jim had removed the stage that had been in the north end of the room and he and Bob Dunton had fixed the walls, created the emergency exit and got a donation of carpeting. Tables and chairs were purchased and a materials cabinet was built.

About this time Rev. Andy Anderson retired to Hillsborough from Conn. and we asked him if he would consider doing a Sunday service every other Sunday at the Town Hall during the winter. He did on the condition that he was only expected to do the service; no meetings and no visits. We agreed.

Rev. Andy's interest grew as the spirit of the church did and it wasn't long before he was our full-time minister, wanting to be active in the church in every way. He continued for 21 years as the minister and is still active as a member of the congregation and occasionally fills the pulpit.

When spring came we moved into the church and Jim talked to Earl Goodspeed about helping put on some dinners to raise money for a furnace. The dinners were usually roast beef and were very successful and held at Camp Morgan lodge, which later became town property. An outdoor gas furnace was purchased and installed, and the Church was insulated. For the first time in years there was heat in the main sanctuary and it could be used year-round.

Sunday school continued and Bob Dunton had the original idea of putting a room under the church to have more space for Sunday school and youth activities. Jim got a generous donation and letters were sent out and gifts poured in. More dinners raised money and the idea became a reality, which turned into the present-day large room with rest rooms and kitchen. The original furnace was replaced to allow for a back entrance and a change in the grading in the back area was affected to allow for parking and the enlarged septic system for the town buildings, which now included the church.

## **THE PARSONAGE**

*By Tom Talpey*

In Ron and Grace Jager's new book on the history of the Congregational Church there is mention of "The Parsonage" -- the little red house across the road from the Shedd Free Library. I was intrigued by their interesting account of it and thought some of our readers might also enjoy it. In 1916 Rev. John Henry Sargent came directly from Boston University's School of Theology to serve as pastor. The organist at the time was Violet Viall, who was also the teacher in the schoolhouse next to the church. They were married about a year later and lived for a few months in the little red house as their first home, until Rev. Sargent moved to Hinsdale as pastor there. (Their marriage lasted for 74 years, when Violet died in the early 1990's. Rev. Sargent died just a few years ago, at age 102. There is another more complete account of this romance in the Jagers' book *Portrait of a Hill Town*.) Some years after that, in 1933, Kenneth L. Palmer, another young minister from Boston took over the pulpit. We can do no better than quote a passage from the Jagers' new book, *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Old Parsonage across from the Shedd Free Library, now owned by the Beede family*. Photo courtesy Eleanor Palmer

"... The first year Mr. Palmer traveled from Boston by train and stage and stayed in different homes for the weekend, but then an interesting chapter in local history repeated itself. Mr. Palmer, like Mr. Sargent twenty years before, found a bride

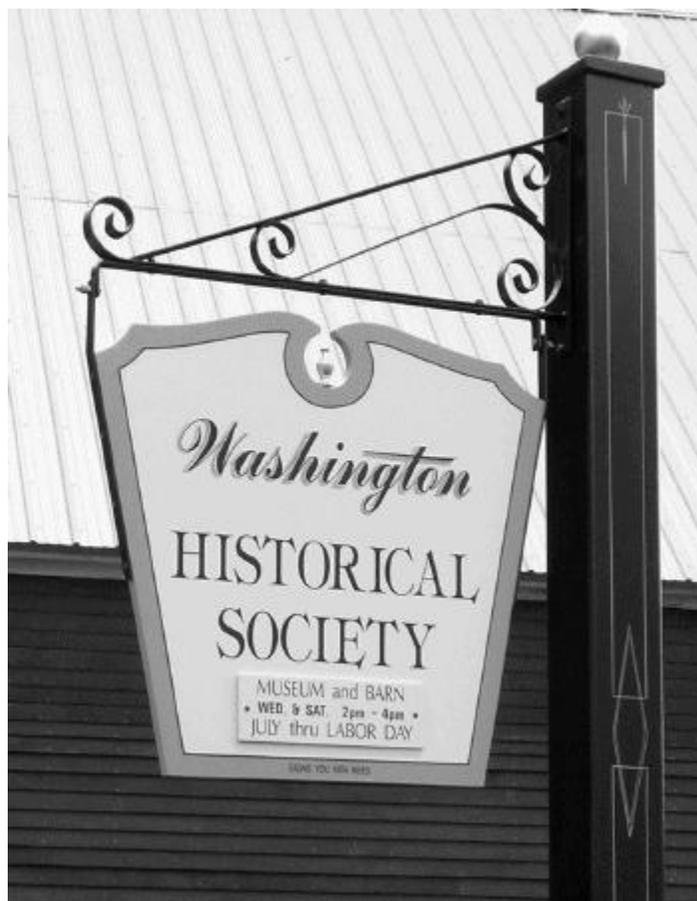
in Washington, and the new couple took up residence in the same little red house across from the Shedd Library that the Sargents had occupied. That house had been known for years as the parsonage, although the church had never owned it."

The plot thickens. First -- the cast of characters: Mr. Palmer had been a counselor at Camp Morgan before he studied for the ministry. Olive Giles was a summer visitor with her parents staying in a cottage along Millen Pond. Both of these people loved Washington, as well as each other, as the reader will see.

Contact by Gwen with Eleanor, Rev. Palmer's daughter, prompted her to graciously send us the following family anecdote of how he met his bride. "... One night, as the story goes, Waldo Farnsworth asked my mother [then Miss Olive Giles] if she would go along with him while he played tunes on his saw for the new preacher. So she did and soon after my parents were married. Their first home was the little red house right beside the road. The winters were cold and I am told that they had to sell their car to heat the house. They stayed there for a short time until my father accepted a call to a church in Massachusetts."

(More about Waldo in our next issue. This is a pitch to get those of you who haven't yet sent us your 2005-2006 dues to pay up!)

The wool arts tour was held Oct 8 & 9 at the Mirage Alpacas Farm in Washington. We have had a food concession at it for several years and did again this year, but the weather was not at all cooperative this time. In spite of rain on Saturday there were a lot of people and we did quite well. Sunday was another story!! The roads were flooded so people could not get into town. We thank everyone who did help or planned to help and couldn't get there. In spite of the weather, we managed to clear our expenses and made a profit of over \$300.



*Our new sign, between the Museum and the Barn, with the barn in the background*