



SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 6

SPRINGFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03284

December 26, 1999

President's Message

Welcome to the LAST year of the Twentieth Century! Yes, I belong to the school that believes the Twenty-first Century does not begin until 2001. Weather permitting, we will have our historical society meeting on January 13, 2000 at 7 p.m. in the Libbie Cass Library Conference Room. The last two years the weather has not cooperated. Maybe we will be lucky this year. I will present the program which I have entitled "What's in a Name?" The title is not too original, but I will be telling how some of the hills, lakes, roads, and other places probably got their names and a little about the people for whom they were named. Some of the names are only used by a few of us today. I'm hoping to show a few slides to go along with the story.

Those of us present at the October historical society meeting enjoyed our evening with Karen Cook, the Springfield spinner who told of her experiences in Washington DC during the Smithsonian Exhibition in early summer and gave a demonstration in weaving. Thanks to Terry and Fred Davis who provided us with special October refreshments of cider and cookies.

Patsy Heath Caswell

PAINT THE BUILDING FUND

The Historical Society wishes to remind you that we are still collecting donations for the Paint the Museum Fund. If you wish to send an end of the year contribution, it should be mailed to Springfield Historical Society, PO Box 6, Springfield, NH 03284. Please indicate that the donation is for the Paint the Museum Fund. "Thank You" to all who have contributed thus far! We are about half way to covering the society's share of the costs.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Muriel Tinkham, our Museum Curator, recently received donations from two families for our museum. Several books on genealogy were donated by Frank Sanders, Jr. The Glasscock family has given some original school desks from the old Maxfield School. These will be restored and displayed in our museum. The Society wishes to express its appreciation for these wonderful gifts.

Three families, two from as far away as California, have contacted Muriel for assistance in tracing their roots. Using old cemetery records and old town documents, Muriel has been successful in locating the ancestors of at least one family thus far. Thank you Muriel for your hard work and dedication.

A Springfield Christmas 1940's-1950's Style *by Patsy Heath Caswell*

Many years have passed, but I still have fond memories of Christmas in Springfield. There seems to have always been snow at Christmas, but that might have been the younger generation wishing for snow, so thinking back, I always see it!

The planning for Christmas began at least a month to six weeks before the program at the town hall. (That is what we called it back then.) Center School and Maxfield School were at the center of the event.

Everyone had a part. There would be poems and skits to memorize; Christmas carols to be sung, and the Nativity scene to perform. It has always been a sore point with me that for at least two years I was supposed to be one of the angels, (not because of my actions...) but I would come down with tonsillitis at the crucial moment. My mother would have made me a beautiful costume out of white cheese cloth with wings covered in same and with silvery trim. Someone else would get to wear my beautiful costume!

Then there would be the exciting moment when we would hear sleigh bells and Santa would burst through the doors of the town hall with candy and treats for one and all! There was a huge Christmas tree to the left of the hall (on the way to the kitchen). There was an old fashioned potbellied stove that was used to heat the hall and located not too far from the kitchen door. It was red hot on the outside and we all gave it wide clearance. If I remember correctly, the older students helped to decorate the tree. There were art projects for days making chains and Chinese lanterns out of red and green construction paper. I believe that we all drew names and every one got a present. I still have a glass container with a donkey for a handle on the lid. It was to hold powder and a puff and Alice Beals had drawn

my name. There would be ice cream cups for all. The evening usually ended with young and not so young playing games led by Pauline Rudner Philbrick. The benches would be pushed aside so that we would form a large circle in the center of the floor and play such games as three deep.

One year when I was in the seventh or eighth grade, I remember that the town nurse, Florence Melendy, was in charge of refreshments for the Christmas party. She gathered my mother and me at Joyce and Velora Rowe's house at the Kazanjian estate to make huge quantities of popcorn that was colored pink and green with sugar syrup similar to molasses balls. This and candy were put into containers, probably stockings, for every child in town.

Before I started first grade at Center School, I was invited to my first school Christmas at Maxfield School on the Fourth New Hampshire Turnpike. I knew most of the children there because my grandparent's farm was

not too far to the north of the school, and I got to know the children during the summers. They also had their poems etc. to recite and the visit from Santa. For some reason, I knew Santa was Mrs. Fred Olney helping out the "real" Santa that night!

Franz

Little did we realize that in another decade or so the school would no longer be the center of the community. Springfield would become regionalized. Not everyone went to the same church, but we all went to Center or Maxfield School, especially Center. It was something that a couple of generations had in common. Life was not perfect. We had some problems along the way, but the school held the community together and gave many of us a pretty good education and fond memories. Most of us went on to high school in New London, Sunapee, Newport and Enfield, but there was a closeness because we had spent eight very important years at Center School.

Patsy Heath Caswell

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