



Springfield Historical Society, Inc. Newsletter
Dedicated to preserving Springfield, NH's History Since 1984
October, 2009

President's Message:

On Thursday evening, October 8th, 2009 the Springfield Historical Society will feature Dr. Robin De Rosa, author of "Specters, Scholars, and Sightseers: Telling (and Selling) the Story of the Salem Witch Trials". In the words of Dr. De Rosa, "When the stories are told of the 1692 Salem witch hunt in which 19 people were executed and hundred imprisoned, 'Truth' both moral and macabre vies with spooky thrills for its authentic place in history". The public is cordially invited to join us for this outstanding presentation so befitting the month of October. The program, arranged by Donna Denniston, Vice-President, will begin at 7:00p.m. in the Town Meeting House, 23 Four Corners Rd., Springfield, NH.

The Meeting House is handicapped accessible. This program is sponsored through a grant from the New Hampshire Humanities Council and admission is free to all. Refreshments will be served following the program. For further information call (603) 763-9302.

Thank yous:

Thank you Donna Denniston, Vice President, for bringing to our 25th Anniversary the great folk music performance of Susie Burke and David Surette. All present certainly enjoyed the evening.

Thank you to everyone who helped celebrate our 25th Anniversary and the Springfield Old Home Day. Those were two fun events. There were quite a few visitors at the museum during the events. Julie Slack, curator, had some new displays and we served cake and punch.

Once again, thanks to Davey Tree Service for removing the overgrown hedge and Brandt Denniston, Brad Butcher, Tim Patten, Jared La Belle, and Ben Keyser for installing the new fence and painting the flag pole. Also, the World War One Memorial looks great repainted as it was in the past.

Thank you, Ed Belfield for organizing the hosts and hostesses for the museum and filling in yourself when needed.

Thank you, Janet Booker and Susan Chiarella for helping me with the survey in Old Pleasant View Cemetery. We are almost finished with that survey which has taken several years.

Thank you, Guy Wheeler, for donating the World War One medals of your uncle, Harland Wheeler. They will be on display at the Springfield Historical Society Museum.

Winner of the Oil Painting:

Congratulations to Neil Donovan who won the drawing of the oil painting depicting a Springfield scene. The money goes to the Student Scholarship Fund. Neil once lived in Springfield and now resides in California.

Change in Article 3 of the Springfield Historical Society Constitution and By Laws: Mission Statement

This change must be voted upon at the October meeting.

The mission shall be to bring together people interested in history, and especially the history of Springfield, New Hampshire. Understanding the history of our town is basic to our way of life. It gives us a better understanding of our town and promotes a better appreciation of it.

The society's major function shall be to collect material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the town, the area, its settlement, its development, its progress and its population. It shall collect printed materials such as letters, diaries, journals, histories, genealogies, biographies, memoranda, reminiscences, roster, records, account books, charts, and surveys; museum material such as pictures, photographs, paintings, portraits, prints, and material objects illustrative of life, conditions, events and activities of the past and present of the town of Springfield. NH.

Only the following part of Article 3 will be changed. The original read: Whenever feasible, the society may attempt to preserve historic buildings and sites. The society shall disseminate historic information, gather and maintain cemetery records, mark historic buildings, sites and trails whenever possible. These last two sentences will be changed to the following: **Whenever feasible, the society shall preserve historic buildings and sites, disseminate historical information, gather and maintain cemetery records, mark historical buildings, sites and land trails and provide scholarships to deserving applicants who are residents of Springfield and attending institutes of higher learning.**

Ideas Please:

We would appreciate your ideas as to what you would like to see the historical society accomplish, or a program you would enjoy. The Springfield Historical Society exists to benefit the people of Springfield and the society members. Do you have a Springfield story to tell? Send it to me! Patsy Caswell at caswellheath@msn.com, or 47 Bliss Mine Rd, Newport, RI, 02840.

Idyll Farm-Wonderwell Information:

Mary Whittemore O'Day, Whittemore, her brother, Charlie Whittemore and sister-in-law Betty Call have given the historical society another interesting picture of Springfield's past. The picture is of Idyll Farm on Philbrick Hill.

The original farm in this location was owned by Wells Sargent. It was eventually sold to Elroy Heath of Wakefield, MA., who used it as a second home and named it Idyll Farm. Mr. Heath also seems to have been the pioneer in the summer home business in Springfield.

Joseph Stoddard bought Idyll Farm from Elroy Heath in 1911 and replaced the house with the type or architecture that you see there today which was popular for summer "cottages" in the early 1900's. The picture donated by the Whittemore/O'Day family shows the workmen who were constructing the new "cottage" in 1912, and while doing so, were boarding at Frank Colby's Cloverleaf Farm across Philbrick Hill Road.

In 1933, Idyll Farm was sold to Dr. Samuel Alexander and renamed Wonderwell.

Old time Springfield natives, come in to the museum and see if you can identify all the workmen in the picture. Not everyone is named. Verto Collins is a familiar name, as is Mrs. Leona Colby, Winfield Call, (relative of Betty Call Whittemore) and Wilbur Knowlton. (Reference: A Pictorial History of Springfield. C.1998, p.98.

Needed Oral History of Springfield people (residents present, past and part-time.)

Are you interested in past events in Springfield or always wanted to be a reporter? We are going to lose a lot of Springfield history if some of the older members in town are not interviewed about their memories of the past. This could be an interesting project. Contact one of the officers or board members if you would like to help.

First Class Reunion Celebrated at the Springfield Historical Society Museum

Thanks to Mildred Beals Bowie, a group of the class of 1955 who could attend, gathered at the museum the end of June. One of their teachers, Marilyn Miller Heath was also present. This group had attended Maxfield School and Center School (now the museum) and both groups became one class at the new Memorial School during the 1948-49 school year. Mildred Bowie organized a wonderful reunion. She put together booklets to which classmates or their families contributed. There were remembrance folders for the four classmates who had passed away and also folders of the other remaining nine in which they shared their memories of life in Springfield and what they have been doing since 1955. A folder was left at the museum for all to see. It is a wonderful story of the families and their growing up in Springfield.

The four deceased classmates are Mary Ann Currier, James Derby, Norman "Bo" Macie, and Carolyn Church.

The remaining classmates are Frances Carpenter Palmer, Gladys Johnson, Judy Kezar Sargent, Lorene "Tink" Patten Osgood, Melvin Macie, Irene Mutney, Mildred Beals Bowie, Ruth Wyman Longley, and Victoria Philbrick Kimball.

Treasurer's Report

At August 31, 2009, assets totalled \$16,224.42 with \$10,561.12 in the Memorial Fund, \$2,666.53 in the Scholarship Fund and \$2,996.77 in the General Fund.

Year-to-date August 31, 2009 Income was \$3,916.76 and Expenses were \$6,973.71 which included \$3,500 in scholarship awards. Net Income was -\$3,056.95.

Scholarship contributions of \$1,428 have been received and are 16% ahead of last year at this time and total contributions are 37% better.

Dues are 45% ahead of last year at this time.

Brandt Denniston, Treasurer, Springfield Historical Society, Inc.

"Makin'Do"

The 1930's and 40's in Springfield, NH

Springfield natives are survivors. There were few who had the luxury of even going to high school in the 1930s. They either had to go to work to help support themselves or their families. It was also not easy getting daily transportation to Newport, Enfield or Sunapee high schools. In the Heath family, Hollis was the only brother who went to high school. He would stay in Enfield with his aunt, Mrs. Hardy, during the week and then walk or ride, if lucky, on Friday afternoon back to the family farm on 4A, then known as the Fourth NH Turnpike. It is not like the 4A you visualize today. In the Spring, it was sometimes impassable due to mud, much worse than the 21st century frost heaves! The other brothers, Paul and Kirk, did manual labor on the roads; sometimes work on the family farm, the Colby Farm, or cutting pulp for Walt Gardner. It was about this time that Kirk became interested in being a carpenter.

It is amazing how many homes in Springfield were built by young working people during the Depression. Both Kirk and my dad, Paul built homes for their families during the 1930s. They helped each other and other men helped also. We still have the house on the North end of Lake Kolelemook. Kirk's house was built on the top of George Hill overlooking McDaniell's Marsh. It is no longer in the family, They built very sturdy homes. They finished rooms, etc. as they had money to do so. Some things took years before

completed, but they ended up with plastered walls, and hardwood floors. The living room furniture in our house came several years later! While our house was being built by the lake, we lived in a snug camp on the eastern boundary of our land. The spring by the road was our water supply. The outhouse was not far from the camp. Uncle Hollis wrote in his diary that we moved into the new house on my second birthday. Ways that others helped out was like Burt Morgan who lived at the intersection of the Bowman Road and what is now Rt 114, used his horses and a rock sled to get the rocks out from under what became the front porch. Mr. Neil Butcher and his family came to Springfield during the 1930s. Ken Butcher told me that his father had read an ad in a Massachusetts paper about a house for sale on Messer Hill Rd. He did beautiful masonry and made plaster resembling tiles on the bathroom walls.

Uncle Hollis and my oldest cousin, Harold Tillson helped build both homes. Harold did so when on school vacations from Manchester West High School,

Other Springfield people building houses during this time were Jane and Loren Patten in the village. Jane still lives in her house. Mr. Ed Brunell built the Patten's home and also Pauline and Bernie Rudner's house across from the swimming beach at Lake Kolelemook. At that time the Rudner's house and the Patten's house were much alike. Springfield summer families built cottages around the lake and others added to or remodeled their larger summer homes.

The summer homes also provided income for the town's people. My mother, Bessie Heath, cleaned summer homes in Springfield and closed them in the fall. She often worked at Adamsfort during the summer. I would either stay on the family farm on 4A with my grandparents or ride in the truck with my father when he was hauling gravel for the roads. I knew every gravel bank in town! When I was at the farm, my grandmother, Clara Heath would sometimes pack sandwiches and I would go with my grandfather in the horse and buggy over Town Farm Hill Road to the village where he would visit with Charlie Bailey who owned the Country Store. (Skippy ice cream cups were 5cents!) Then, we would visit Arthur Collins' blacksmith shop at the foot of the hill. Sometimes we would take a salt lick down to the heifers at what was known then as the Sheep Pasture (I never saw any sheep there!) and later became Kirk Heath's sugar orchard. Other times we might go to Hardy Hill to see the McDonalds or the Johnsons, who grew potatoes. One exciting adventure happened when I was four or five. There had been a murder in a house at the corner of Hardy Hill Road and what we now call 4A. I use to know the names involved. Friends staying at the family farm at the time, took my grandfather down to the scene of the crime and I, his sidekick, went also! I remember seeing state troopers for the first time. For years we called the place "The Murder House." It is now where the state stores sand and salt for the roads in winter.

Many of the Springfield families lived on farms of all sizes. There was Colby's Cloverleaf Farm on Philbrick Hill; the Lanes and Philbricks had farms on Sanborn Hill. Bill Hill and George Saunders had farms on George Hill Road. Del Patten, Arthur Collins, and Leighton Philbrick had farms in town on the main street. Burt Morgan's farm was at the corner of what is now Route 114 and the Bowman Road. Robert Collins and Justin Nichols had farms on what is now called Nichols Hill. I was always impressed with Aunt Betty Collins who named her cows such pretty names as "Buttercup." Carl Heath and Harland Heath had farms on what is now 4A.

How did we "make do"? Even if they did not have a large farm, many homes in Springfield had a barn and kept a cow or two and a garden to supplement their food supply. This probably lasted until the 1940s. They grew their own food and canned everything in sight! My mother picked, cleaned and canned many quarts of dandelions every spring. They lasted through the winter and were my favorite vegetable. My parents would buy or go to a farm and pick a bushel of pears or peaches and can them. They were canning pears the night of the '38 Hurricane when the chimney caught fire and fortunately burned itself out! String beans and peas would be canned, even beef or venison which would be used in stews and other casserole dishes. It seems that those of

us who grew up in the depression were taught to eat everything on our plates and still do! The younger generation does not! Why did our parents can fruits and vegetables? There were no freezers available until after World War Two. We ate lots of puddings such as bread, rice, and Apple Brown Betty, all very filling. Saturday night supper was Boston Baked Beans that cooked all day in the oven, hot dogs, and brown bread. Families often made their own ice cream with an ice cream maker. You turned the crank and always wanted to lick the dasher when it came out of the ice cream maker. Milk did not come homogenized out of the cow!! Homogenized milk, at least in the country, became available after World War Two. Therefore, you could use the cream that came to the top of the milk bottles to make ice cream or whipped cream for deserts. You could also whip evaporated milk if you were desperate. Why not cool whip? It was probably closer to the 1950s before cool whip became available. There was no aluminum foil or plastic wrap. Wax paper was used. Many kitchens had a roller cotton towel on which to dry your hands. You pulled the towel to the next dry spot. Multitudes of paper towels came later.

One time before our sun porch was winterized, a partridge flew through the window glass onto the porch. My mother, Bessie, the great white hunter, got her trusty shot gun and shot the partridge and the leg of the chair! We were proud of the hole in the chair leg for years.

We did not have the dental care that children have today. Few of our parents could have afforded braces. This is another way to tell people who were children of the 1930s and 40s.

We made do by not having everything we wanted! I remember wanting a doll house in the worst way. By the time I finally got it, I appreciated and still have it. The same with a bicycle. I thought I would never get one. When I did, it was a second-hand one, but I loved and enjoyed it for years. Nat and Shirley Patten, Joyce Rowe, Ella Carpenter and I would ride all over Springfield, Georges Mills, and Grantham on our bicycle trips. We did not have as many clothes as we do today. Maybe that is why closets were made smaller in the 1930s. Often times we had "hand me downs" and when we out grew them, if they were still in one piece, we handed them down to someone else. Rummage sales run by the Springfield Methodist Church were quite popular.

We felt fortunate to have a small radio from Montgomery Ward's Store. We could get WBZ Boston. Dad could listen to Lowell Thomas and mom and I could listen to the soap operas when I came home from school. On Sunday evenings, you could get "The Shadow" and "I Love a Mystery." They were best with the lights out.

Somehow my parents managed to take me in our model A Ford to the Shirley Temple movies in Newport or Lebanon. There were no large highways and the road to Newport or Lebanon were much longer and narrower than today, so it took longer to go there and back. People would often load up their car with friends and relative car loads would go to a movie or an event such as fireworks. Our model A Ford could carry three in front and three in the rumble seat. Several car loads went several times to the Fights in Danbury. They were exhibits probably by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). I remember it being dark and lots of people. I became quite a referee yelling, "man on the rope, man on the rope!" In the 1930s it was a long, dark lonely road to Danbury no matter which way you went. Now it can be done in forty-five minutes. It was not unusual to have flat tires on these trips. It often meant patching the tire and continuing the journey.

During World War Two years, life was much the same as the 1930s for people who stayed in Springfield. In many cases, they began to work for higher wages in machine shops and woolen mills in other towns, but there was no place to spend it or anyway to get there! So we "made do," As the war began, people volunteered old aluminum pots and pans for the war effort. We stashed them in the rumble seat of the Ford as we went from house to house. People at home became observers of planes flying over. On

Philbrick Hill, just past the Morgan driveway on a little slice of land before the Colby Farm, was a one room observation camp with a telephone. The town's people would take turns reporting on planes flying over by calling the operator and giving a description of what they thought they saw and heard. I thought it quite exciting to be able to sit there with my mother. My father, Paul was working in Winsor, Vt. at Cones Automatic Machine Shop. Gas was rationed and you had only a certain number of stamps issued to you. He lived in a dormitory when he was working and was able to come home on his days off. Some men, such as Uncle Hollis Heath, worked in a woolen mill in Enfield and stayed in town. He and Aunt Dot were living in Uncle Kirk's house on George Hill while he and his family moved to Newmarket, NH for the duration and Uncle Kirk worked at the Portsmouth (Kittery) naval yard. The Charlie King family left home, moved to Etna, NH, and never did move back to town as did several families. Robert Collins, Leo Duford and others worked in woolen mills in Newport or Franklin and worked family farms by day. Of course the men carpooled whenever possible to save gas rationing stamps. The mica mines were in operation around Springfield. Jane Patten tells of sorting mica in an assembly line in Newport where the mica was processed.

During the war years, our food was much the same. Butter and sugar were rationed. We could get dairy products at my grandfather's farm, yet I can remember that funny margarine or oleo in a bag with a round pill like object filled with yellow something. One squeezed the bag and voila ... your margarine became yellow! We learned to bake with maple syrup or honey for sweetening. Also popular were gallon cans of Panama Syrup. My first chocolate cake was made with honey or maple syrup. I still have the recipe. It was not a bad way to "make do"!

In 1945, after World War Two was over, many of the farms in town began to disappear as the children and grandchildren went where there were more opportunities or found other ways to make a living. Springfield also lost five fine young men during the war. By the 1960s, new people discovered Springfield. It was becoming a bedroom community for many especially after Route 89 was completed. Things now taken for granted by today's youth and their parents such as TVs, computers, cell phones, and many more modern inventions began to change the way people live. But, I bet you will still find those children of the 1930s and 40s who still eat leftovers, clean their plates and believe that appliances should last forever because it was engrained in us!

Have you noticed that the word "Depression" has not been used since the 1930's? Poor economic times are now called "Recessions"...but isn't a rose a rose? Do you feel repressed or depressed if you can't pay the mortgage or have lost your job?

Memories of "Makin' Do" by Patsy Heath Caswell. Tell us how you made do during the 1930s-40s.

Springfield Historical Society Website --- www.historicallspringfieldnh.org

There is more information about Springfield on our website thanks to the dedication of Brandt Denniston. As an example, there is a data sheet with information about 400 people who are buried in Old Pleasant View Cemetery giving their birth and death dates. We have not finished the survey yet and can always use more help, weather permitting, the second week of October. There is also information about the other Springfield cemeteries. The newer Pleasant View Cemetery has not been done yet. If you would like to help, contact Patsy Caswell.

There are also other stories and articles about Springfield's people and past that were once in our newsletters.

