



July 2004

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

July Program:

Don Garlock, Vice President of the historical society, has arranged for Bernie Woodruff to give her talk, "A Novice in New Hampshire" at the annual meeting of the society to be held at the Libby Cass Library Conference Room, 7:00pm on 8th July. If you are a part time resident you will be able to relate to her talk.

Dr. Bednar's presentation was well attended in April. It was a very interesting story of how he came from Czechoslovakia to the US and eventually Springfield. Dr. Bednar lived history during the period leading up to and after World War II in Europe, that can only be imagined by most of us. We were fortunate to count "Denny" as one of ours. Sadly, Dr. Bednar died on May 22nd.

We want to thank all of you who have sent contributions for "*The Collection of Springfield Stories*" We are planning to publish this summer. Also, for the many chances you have taken on the oil painting of Lake Kolelemook. The drawing will be at the annual July meeting on the 8th. Thank you to Nancy Watkins who is clipping Springfield articles from newspapers and Beverly Bacon who keeps her eye on the VALLEY NEWS for us. She knows the old Springfield relationships that others of us might miss. Cynthia Brusck has offered to organize the maps and Stuart Wade to help with genealogy. Terry and Fred Davis will help Muriel Tinkham

to set up the museum for the summer and finish repairs there. Thank you also, to Barbara Garlock who has taken care of the April refreshment for several years.

I want to apologize for the RED dots some of you found on your newsletter. In this electronic age, for some reason, the new list of those paid did not reach me before I sent the newsletter to the printers. We have made the corrections.

We will not be able to have our antique appraisal this year do to the renovations that will be made on the meeting house. We hope to do it again in the future because it was fun and a successful venture.

For the first time in 20 years, we are raising our dues. Our membership is from July 1st to June 30th the following year. See the enclosed dues information.

The election of officers is July 8th. The following is the slate of officers for 2004-2005. President Patsy Caswell, Vice President Don Garlock, Secretary Donna Denniston, and one year board, Dickie Hopper. The other positions are not due for election this year. Trudy Heath will still be treasurer, Bob Nulsen and Muriel Tinkham are on the board. If you wish to nominate a candidate for the above positions, you may do so anytime before the annual meeting with the approval of the candidate.

Patsy Heath Caswell, President

THE SPRINGFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

For the last few years, I have published the annual report in the newsletter to make sure that we reach all our members.

At the annual meeting, July, 2003. the officers elected were the following: President, Patsy Caswell, Vice President, Don Garlock, Secretary, Donna Denniston, Treasurer, Trudy Heath, Board members, Fred Davis one year, Bob Nulsen two years, and Muriel Tinkham for three years.

The annual meeting was held at the Meeting House. Our speaker was Dr. David Watters of UNH whose topic was "*Robert Frost's New Hampshire.*" An open house was held at the museum after the program.

Instead of a program in October, Fred and Terry Davis organized a successful Appraisals' Fair.

Our speaker at the January 2004 meeting was Judith Myer of UNH whose program was "*Number Please.*" It was fun remembering the predial days of party lines and the operator knowing everything going on in town.

In April, we were fortunate to have one of our own who chose to live here, Dr. Zdneck Benar, tell us, about the trail of events that led him and his family to settle on Philbrick Hill.

We also began our first annual appeal for funds letter which you should all have received by now. A raffle has also been held for our new publication that is in the works.

During this year, Bob Nulsen, with help from Dickie Hopper and Muriel Tinkham, have been organizing "*The Collection of Springfield Stories*" that will soon be published. Thanks also go to Dickie and Dave Hopper and Trudy Heath for getting the appeals letter out to everyone.

All of our interesting programs were organized by Don Garlock, our vice-president.

Thank you to all the members who have helped the historical society in so many ways.

Patsy Heath Caswell, President

SPRINGFIELD'S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY, 1788-1982

This is an incomplete history of religious affiliations in Springfield. Some records were probably never kept, others lost or maybe in someone's attic. Maybe the day will come when more information is available.

Springfield was not like the southern towns of New Hampshire or Massachusetts with the Congregational Church and the village green.

The original Protectworth charter, 1769, had made no plans for religion. After the American Revolution and before we were incorporated as Springfield, a meeting of the proprietors was held in Portsmouth at the John Wendell Esq. house on 14th April 1789. It was voted to give the Town 75 acres out of any one hundred acre lot to be used for a Ministerial Seat forever. It was to be as near the center of town as possible. At the same time a burying ground and training field were also mentioned. This is the area we know of as Old Pleasant View Cemetery today. On 7 March 1785, the selectmen voted to higher[sic] four days preaching this year and chose Ebenezer Loverin. Another year six pounds might be raised to pay a preacher, another year none. This varied on and off for many years.

Springfield was incorporated in January 1794 replacing Protectworth and the selectmen voted fifteen pounds for preaching and chose a committee to "lay out said money for preaching."

Once incorporated in March, 1795, the selectmen sent Philip Colby to Salisbury, NH to get a copy of the plans those selectmen had used for their meeting house. By 7 Sept 1795, the plan was laid out before the town. At that time it was also decided that when the said house was built any Gospel Minister or Preacher of any denomination shall preach in said house, he or they being of good character, at the request of any denomination in said Town, according to their members. The new meeting house was built in the southeast corner of what is now Old Pleasant View Cemetery, near the town pound and the Unknown Soldier placed there at a much later date. The first meeting was held in the new building 28 August 1797.

On 2 May 1808, the selectmen sold the 75 acre Ministerial Lot (It must not have been in what is now the cemetery lot.) that had been granted by the Protectworth proprietors to the town. The

funds realized would be used for paying ministers, and repairs to the meeting house.

In 1823, the Minister Money was divided among the different Christian denominations in town. Each person in town made known to the selectmen to what denomination he belonged.

In 1851, the town's voters approved moving the meeting house to the grove near the Grist Mill, the spot to be fitted ready to set said house by individuals, free from any expense to the town. This is where the meeting house is still located in 2004. The committee of Joseph Nichols, Richard Sanborn, D.N. Adams, J.G. McAlvin and John B. Hovey selected the site. They reported that the building could be moved for about \$300.00. The lower part would be finished for a Town House, and the upper part for a Meeting House. The Town and Meeting House Society would each pay half the expense of repairing and keeping in repair outside of the house and for their own repairs on the inside. It was voted to commence moving the house on 13 May 1851. It was moved down the hill on logs with the aid of forty (40) yokes of oxen. At one point on the hill, the men nearly lost control of the building! The dedication sermon was given by Rev. Daniel Noyes, Congregationalist minister, who was a native of the town and a long time professor at Dartmouth College. He was followed in the service by Rev. Reuben Sanborn, educated at Harvard and a Presbyterian. Rev. James Fowler, a successful Universalist preacher, Rev. Loren Webster, son of Mrs. D.N. Adams an Episcopal clergyman from Ashland, NH. and others.

During the early years, the church was kept going by laymen if no preachers were available or no money had been appropriated to pay them. The lay preachers, such as Moses Richardson kept the meeting house going. His son, Daniel began the first Sabbath school in District #9 school then located on the "old New London Rd" (Webster Pass near Devil's Den)

Charles McDaniel lists many of the preachers beginning with Tilly Howe, a teacher and preacher through the years to Rev. Lewis Howard, a Methodist who at age 83 was still living on Howard Ave. (last house on right leaving Springfield, 2004) and preaching at the Meeting House. There were several visiting preachers such as Walter Harriman, ex-governor of NH who preached to the Universalists, and Rev. George Gardner, New London, who was a Calvinistic Baptist.

There was a church built and still established in 1886 in the "gore" which had been annexed to Grantham. There was also a chapel at the Fourth New Hampshire Turnpike on the corner of Shad Hill Rd. as late as the early 1900s. The building and property was later owned by Carl Heath, and torn down circa 1950. The Seventh Day Baptists met in homes as late as the 1940s, and my grandmother use to mention the Holy Rollers which probably dated back to the turn of the Twentieth Century.

Two organizations were the main stays of the meeting house church from the mid 1800's through the first quarter of the 1900's. The Springfield Union Meeting House Society was a men's group, organized January 2, 1853. Only the pew owners were members and one vote was allowed from each pew. They met on the first Monday of January each year at the store or at Dr. Goodhue's home across the street to decide on occupancy of the Meeting House for worship, to elect officers, to transact all business necessary for the good of the society, to authorize procurement of wood and lights, to hire a suitable person for janitorial services and assess and collect tax enough from the pew holders to defray expenses. For many years the original tax was twenty-five cents for each pew. In 1865, Civil War years, the tax was raised to fifty cents for each pew. This society was the backbone of the Church providing for the physical needs such as repairs, paying bills, over the years. It is interesting that when Dr. David Goodhue died in 1914 after being the Society's secretary for twenty-eight years, his wife, Abbey J. Goodhue replaced him until the end of the official society's meetings in 1922. She was the only woman mentioned in the society. By 1921, it was difficult to collect money to even pay for janitorial service because most of the former pew members were dead, moved away, or lost interest.

The Ladies Social Benevolent Society had members that were both members of the Church and non-members of the Church. Their first meeting was held June 15, 1859. They met monthly at different member's homes. They made several donations over the years such as purchase of a Sabbath School Library, purchasing blinds and choir books. They also were involved during the Civil War years sending packages to the soldiers made up of mittens, footings, soap, shirts, bandages, sheets, drawers, pillow cases, quilts, and papers

of cornstarch and towels. In 1862, the Concord Soldier's Aid Society sent cloth to the group. "After many tears were shed on it, the ladies took it home to work it up."

By the 1870s the ladies began to lose interest, but did purchase a long worked for carpet for the church in 1876. There is no reference of the Ladies Social Benevolence Society after 1877. While it existed, it was a social meeting for women, with men attending occasionally. They assisted the church and town. It was equivalent to a modern day Ladies Aid Society, but not United Methodist Women.

In February 1894, the Methodist Society was organized and took charge of worship services into the early 1990s. The first Methodist minister was C.J. Brown. On 9 March, the Church was officially named the Howard Memorial Church after the Reverend Lewis Howard, the retired Methodist preacher who had served Springfield from time to time until he was 83 years old. He died in 1892.

Evening meetings were held in Maxfield School on the Fourth New Hampshire Turnpike (4A) in 1896 with an average of 50 people attending. The pastor's salary was \$200.00 in 1897. During these years, the Church congregations dropped in numbers and the Sunday School declined sharply. The horse sheds where church goers could leave their horses, were across the road from the Meeting House and were repaired in 1903. The following year, Lydia J. Hill and family gave the bell for the Church belfry.

Many things were tried in the next few years to try to accommodate people wanting to worship. At one time Grantham and Springfield combined services from June to October. A Junior Society was started to teach young people the commandments and Bible verse. The Ladies of the Church organized "sociables" each month during the winter. In 1906, there were no regular preaching services, Sunday School or Christian Endeavor Meetings. By 1914, church services were held in homes during cold weather. Helen Philbrick reorganized the Sunday School. With World War I, it was difficult to get a pastor. Finally in 1919, N. D. Witham was hired at \$350.00 and granted a two weeks vacation. Under him the church flourished for nine years. Renovations took on the interior of the church. Richard Smith became leader of the Boy's Club and a choir was started under the direction of Harlow Broe. The Church accepted an organ

presented by the Grantham Church and arranged by George Sacks. The new organ was dedicated and a Baccalaureate Service for the graduating class of 1928 Eighth Grade Class was held.

The first lady Methodist pastor in Springfield from 1929-1940 was Alice Mellor who served the longest of any of the twentieth century pastors. Church and Sunday School attendance was not high, but the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was quite active under the leadership of Helen and George Philbrick. This group earned nearly as much money for the church as the year's weekly offering in 1932. The pastor's salary was \$224. Until 1940, Springfield shared their pastor with Grantham. From 1941-1953, they were affiliated with Newport. Springfield joined with Sunapee from 1954-1957. Hollis French, a retired minister from Grantham, served Springfield from 1958-1963. After that time the church was affiliated with Georges Mills and Sunapee.

Some of the most active members of the congregation between 1918 and 1920 were Margaret Bailey, Libbie Cass, Martha Collins, Evan George, Addie Philbrick, Seely Philbrick, and H. Pauline Rudner. The ladies had an active Sewing Circle which made articles for the Christmas Sale. The town meeting dinner was organized each year, as well as suppers during the year. Pauline Rudner Philbrick was usually the Sunday School Superintendent, relieved at times by Marion Heath and Edna Howard. A new carpet was installed in 1936 and Church Vacation School was held that year. Libbie Cass was in charge of the installation of electric lights in 1939. In 1945, the Church was redecorated at a cost of \$370.17.

On 10 February, 1946, the Administrative Board voted to change the name of the church from Howard Memorial to the Springfield Methodist Church, but it was never referred to as such!

The church was most active from 1948-1953 under Rev. Maurice H. Porter. Twenty-six people joined the church and in 1953, fourteen children were baptized. Church attendance averaged forty-five. Rev. Porter was very popular with the teenagers. Not mentioned in the articles about the church was the teenage choir in the late 1940s, early 1950s. Pauline Rudner was our organist. Practice was held in private homes that had a piano. Later during this period, an adult choir was started by Joe

Crowningshield and a junior choir under the direction of Edna Hazen, whose daughter, Sandra, played the organ for the choir.

Hollis Heath was elected charge lay leader in April 1953, serving for twenty-three years. He served in several other positions and did other tasks also. Marilyn Heath filled many positions over the years.

An electric Worlitzer organ was given to the church in memory of Margaret and Charles Bailey in 1959. In 1965, it was replaced by a Thomas organ.

In 1964, under Reverend Ennis Coale, the Sunday School space was changed. Pews numbered 26 and 28 were removed and the Knights room was made into a classroom. There was a movable partition given by the United Church of Christ in Keene, that could be used to meet the needs of the church. The back choir loft was torn out to make room for the new movable Sunday School room in the back of the church. A closet was also made for choir robes.

Hazel Patten was church treasurer for twenty-nine years, succeeding Helen Philbrick, who served twenty-four years in that capacity.

1971-1982 were difficult years while members tried to keep the church going. The Anderson families were diligent workers in the church.

Terry Davis in 1971, chaired the Administrative Board and continued to do so for ten years. She also followed her mother, H. Pauline Philbrick as Superintendent of the Sunday School, and organized many benefits. Fred Davis also filled many positions in the church over the years and became a certified lay speaker in 1973.

A seminary student, Linda Littlefield, came to help the church in the summer of 1976.

There were many projects to raise money for the church such as in 1981, a dance, town meeting dinner, craft work, Lord's Acre Auction, and other events.

During the winters of 1964 through 1982, the church service and Bible study was held in homes throughout the town. Church services were held at different times, trying to find the best time for all wishing to attend.

Dr. Robert Schroder was minister from 1979-1982. He tried to reach the community by holding office hours every Monday at the Memorial Building for all wishing to attend.

There were other Springfield people who worked to keep the church going during these later years, and who are not mentioned in this short article, but they played an important part.

By the 1980s and 1990s, there were few active members left in the church. Some had died, others moved away, and Springfield was becoming a bedroom community. New arrivals in town often were affiliated with other churches. Center School, the Howard Memorial Church, and the Country Store had once been the centers of town life in Springfield for over 100 years. Gradually each one was closed.

More in depth material can be found in *THE HISTORY OF SPRINGFIELD* by Charles McDaniel, c 1886 and *THE HISTORY OF HOWARD MEMORIAL CHURCH, 1789-1982*, compiled by Terry Davis and Edna Howard. This material is available through the Springfield Historical Society.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT SPRINGFIELD?

I LIKED THE FOLLOWING:

Watching the return of the lone loon of Lake KOLELEMOOK the day the ice goes out, and seeing it leave the day before it freezes over around Thanksgiving Day. It has been with us for fourteen years.

Also, Springfield stories passed down through the years. Glen Matherson, one time owner of the Country Store, used to tell the story of a notorious father and his sons who came into the store one day. One of the sons was practicing shop lifting and Glen spoke to the father. Father said to son, "Didn't I tell you not to steal anything you can't use?"

And, driving into Springfield the day before Easter and seeing two policemen directing traffic in front of the Memorial Building while the children were having an Easter egg hunt!

There are more such stories, BUT NOW TELL US WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT SPRINGFIELD! (Actually, I prefer the word, "love.")

DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES!