



Campton Historical Society

Winter Newsletter

The Campton Schools

By Michelle Betts

Today's Campton PTA recently gave the Historical Society and our town a gift in the form of sponsoring the historic site markers for the school houses dotting the Campton landscape. The end of their lives as school houses came about in the late 1950's.

In 1957 & 58 the Campton Parent Teacher Association came to the position of supporting the centralization of the Campton Schools, although not all members agreed to support an eight room schoolhouse. Back in the 50's, the PTA carried much more political weight in town than it does today. As a civic organization, it was a place outside of

church where women could come together to socialize for an important purpose...Today, so many mothers work outside the home and regulations are so strict, that the time, energy, and influence on our schools that parents are able to exert is much less than those bygone days...But in 1958, the Campton PTA's influence most certainly shaped what our school is today...



Branch School 1961

one room schools that were without running water replaced by a central school building. Through programs, the PTA attempted to show the educational advantages of a central school, and had a panel discussion of these advantages comparing the multiple grade rooms with the single grade room. In 1957 there were 8 schools operating in Campton. The Blair School, The Branch School (also known as the West Campton School), The Village School, The Center School, The Beebe River School, & The Livermore School were among them. The Campton PTA of 1958 felt their main purpose as an organization was to work toward improving the Campton Schools. They extolled the virtues of Campton teachers, but felt that they were working under a handicap being in such old buildings,

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Campton Garden Club Celebration

The Bridge Lighting October 9th, 2005

By Jacquie Dearborn

Curtain up. Light the lights. We got nothin to hit but the heights... Bugs Bunny & Co.

Campton villagers, officials and friends turned out in droves for the grand opening of the new lights on Campton Bridge. This special event was the result of several years of efforts by local people to effect necessary repairs to the bridge, replace

the large lamps on posts at each end of the bridge and to re-light the lamps.

The members of the Campton Garden Club under the leadership of Acting President Carol Lenahan, in the last year contacted the departments responsible for improving this important center of Campton village. They received

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If your business would like to sponsor CHS, contact any of the officers or directors on page 3.



Several years ago, we conducted a very successful pledge drive. As a thank you to persons who pledged \$500, we presented this framed, matted, hand-colored sketch of the Town House by local artist Cheryl Johnson to them. The frame is oak, and measures 23" X 19", with the sketch 14" X 11". We have one of these available for the first \$500 donation. It is numbered 4, and is the highest number created for us. You may also see Cheryl's work at Artistic Roots in Campton, and at several other galleries. We have a plaque in our lobby where donors of \$500 and above are also recognized. We are a 501 (c) 3 organization, so you may realize a tax benefit from a donation. Check with your tax advisor.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTIONS

By Walt Stockwell Librarian/Curator

We recently received some winter clothing items on loan from John and Christine Dole. This led to some winter sports items from Mary Durgin. Add pictures and other winter artifacts already in our collections, throw in a few postcards and a poster from the Ski Museum, and we were able to set up a Winter Exhibit. This is how it multiplies. What seems like a small addition frequently expands into a bigger collection of artifacts.

Another addition is a painting by Max Haley of the Herm Avery home on Ellsworth Hill.

This compliments another of Max's paintings of the Town House already on display. In researching some background material on Max, we found that we had none in our files. This in turn led to e-mail communications with two of his children, and through them, we hope to add another Campton person to our growing paper file. And we are receiving an increasing number of requests for just this type of information. This is how it multiplies. What seems like a small addition grows into a bigger collection of artifacts and information.

And, we also received some very nice photographs of an old time logging camp from the effects of a long-term member who recently passed away. This is how our collection multiplies.

Think of Campton Historical Society now, and also in your estate planning. We are a 501 (c) 3 organization, so there may also be tax benefits for you. Come to the April 17 program and check out new additions, and newly painted main hall. And think about what you can do to add to our collections of Campton area history.

Historic Site Markers

By Walt Stockwell

Last Fall, we installed our first Historic Site Marker at the Town Pound off Route 3 south. This was the Eagle Scout Project of Christopher Pitts. This gave us the impetus to proceed with additional markers, a project we have wanted to do for some time.

We now have sponsors for 15 additional sites, including seven of the original Precinct Schools (thanks to the Campton PTA). Others include the Town House, three covered bridges, the Upper Village, and more. The signs and posts are being prepared over the winter, and will be planted in the

spring. We will look at additional sites in the next phase.

In addition, explanatory brochures are being designed to supplement these historic sites. We do not have funding for these, but solicit your support.

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Keep your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth open!!!

We are planning some fun, interesting and educational events. Here are some we are considering.

- Spring Day Concert
- Campton Heritage Day
- Antique Vehicle Day
- Field Trip to Heritage (This is their last year!)
- Field Trip to Rye NH to see WWII remains
- Regular monthly programs



Campton School continued from page 1

and since the schools were widely separated, the children could not enjoy the educational and social advantages which could be obtained when youngsters of one age and grade work and play together. These thoughts were recorded by Jane Pierce, President of the Campton PTA in 1957-58.

Pushing this agenda became a joint effort between the PTA and School Board and they worked together in the community to get information out.

The Campton School Board & PTA sponsored a talk February 6 at 8 pm on school construction, costs & facilities at the Campton Town House which featured the architect Irving Hersey of Hersey Associates of Durham. Mr. Hersey's firm had designed 94 schools in the 20 preceding years. It was an opportunity for Campton residents to find out what it would cost to build a school or schools and the incidentals to expect. After this informational meeting "The Campton School Question" as it became known, was put to vote on March 6th of 1958.

Sent as a public service announcement by the Campton PTA, was a flyer, titled "The Campton School Question."

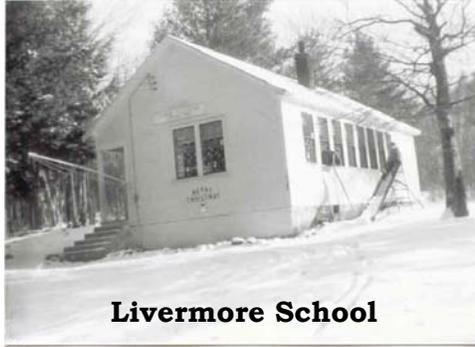
Four proposals were to be put in front of voters.

The first plan called for drilling wells and piping water into the four one room schools. This was estimated to cost \$20,000.00 and the State wouldn't pay any of it because the educational facilities would not be improved. We would still have the same set-up and at the added cost of 20% of an eight-room school.

The second plan was to build two two-room schools. That would make four schools as against what had been six. The schools would cost about half of what one eight room school would cost. If there should be no State Aid for this plan, the cost would be two thirds of what an eight room school would cost.

The third plan was for one new four room school to replace the four one room schools. In such a school, there would be only two grades to a room, which the PTA and school board felt was important for better teaching. However, there would be a demand that the present two

room school houses in the Village and Beebe River would also be run as two grades-to-a-room schools. So...that would mean the town would find themselves with a debt load of \$50,000.00, and more transportation needs, and the upkeep of 3 schools with 8 teachers.



Livermore School

The fourth plan cost the most, but offered the most. It was for the 8 room school which would mean one teacher to a grade and one grade to a room. The State would pay 30% of the cost and it could be built for \$100,000.00 of which the state would pay \$30,000.00. It was to put the town in the forefront of the changing philosophy of education. It would make a hot lunch program

possible for all the children. Rumney had voted for this addition to their school program. Transportation costs would not be much higher than they would be under the second and third plans. But what about taxes?...75 out of 100 taxpayers would pay an extra 15 cents per week.

The PTA closed there flyer with these thoughts...

The question was urgent. Carrying on in the one room schools that fell so short of what they expected for the times. They asked this question: "Do we take a plan that will cost more, and give us something for our money; or do we save something today, and leave a problem for tomorrow?"



Upper Village School

And quoting the PTA of 1958, "We urge that the School Meeting vote to build an eight-room school. It means better teaching and better education. It will be an asset to the town, and in the long run, it will save money. In every town with a school situation similar to Campton's, eventually they have built a central school."

And the rest is history...

Lester Mitchell had relayed how "fun" it was be to be the student charged with lighting the woodstove first thing on a snowy morning, breaking open a hole in the ice for water, as we drove by the Bog Road school house. The historical society has many pictures of the schools, all of which were white at one time. Of the surviving school houses, 7 will have site markers. Look for them in the spring...and imagine...No bathrooms, no running water, no automatic heat, very little paper, combined classrooms...how times have changed in one lifetime.

Campton Historical Society P.O. Box 160, Campton, NH 03223

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I WANT YOU!

By Walt Stockwell



- To sit down right now and think about what you have that constitutes Campton Area history. It may be an artifact, a picture, or a family history or genealogy.
- To locate that item (I know that these things are out there, and you know where they are).
- To think about whether the Campton Historical Society would be a good custodian for it, to share with others, and to contribute to the knowledge base they are collecting about our past,-----and if so,
- To call Walt Stockwell (Librarian/Curator) at 726-3813 or by e-mail at flagman13@adelphia.net to discuss a donation or loan.
- To accept our gratitude for helping us in our mission.



*Hildreth School
Summer home of
Mr. & Mrs. Josiah Triska*

The Boston Post Cane

By Walt Stockwell

In 1909, Edward A. Grozier, Publisher of the Boston Post newspaper, distributed 431 of these canes in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. They were presented to the oldest male in each community who was a registered voter.

In 1920, the honor was extended to women.

Here in Campton, the last person to have one of the original canes was a Mr. Hussey. His home, and the cane, burned on April 4, 1931.

In 1991, the Campton Historical Society reinstated the idea, and obtained a replica.

The first recipient was Sadie M. Brown (1892-1995)

Florence R. O'Hearn (1893-1997) was the next honoree.

Gladys B. Johnson (1904-2005) carried on the tradition.

The current holder of the Campton (Boston Post) Cane is Alice Garland.

There is also a replica on display at the Campton Historical Society.

Building Update

By Scott Pulsifer

Have you seen our main hall at CHS since it's been painted? Gone are the wood smoke smudges that were on all the tin joints. The flaky places on the ceiling have been repaired and painted. Holes have been plugged. It's beautiful. As in the front rooms, we tried to reproduce the mustard color that the tin was first painted with in 1913. Many thanks to Mike Benoit of Alpine Painting for a job well done.

Speaking of front rooms, take a peek in the old Selectmen's office. That's been repainted too and the old lowered ceiling removed. There originally had been a single light in the center of the room and when they had made the jump from kerosene to electric light, that was okay. But we'd been used to fluorescent lights on the lowered ceiling and that left us with a problem. One 200 watt light wasn't going to do the job. Eureka, we discovered a chandelier (on sale!) at Home Depot. It had 5 arms and 5 lights and globes that went well with the new mustard painted walls. With 5-23 watt compact fluorescent lights (100 watt equivalent light) we now have 500 watts of light. Brilliant!

In the Grange Hall there used to be a kitchen. We're laying plans to have a kitchen again. We have to meet some fire code requirements that they didn't have to worry about in 1913. The lead pipe drain sticking out of the rear of the building has to go also. We're getting estimates for electrical outlets, sinks, cabinets, sheetrock, and so on.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.WATERVILLEVALLEYREGION.COM/HISTORICALSOCIETY

Historic Site Markers continued from page 2

They have been designed with a space on the cover for sponsors, or for a memorial dedication. These should be particularly attractive for businesses, as a way to place their name before the heritage tourism visitors to our area. Call Walt at 726-3813 to discuss how we might help each other.

One of our major historic site identification projects has been completed at Blair Covered Bridge. After discussing this for several years, and 12 months of dedicated effort, we now have a New Hampshire State Highway Historic Marker installed. We are thankful to several state agencies who were involved in the process. And we are especially grateful to Representative Robert Barker who guided the proposal through the several steps in the approval process.

Watch the newspapers in the Spring for further information and site locations.

Be proud of Campton's Heritage !

Campton Garden Club Celebration continued from page 1

an education in the requirements of Public Service of NH and the Dept. of Transportation (D.O.T.) regulations and in local electrical codes. At club meetings Ms. Lenahan would share this bureaucratic tangle with members, which included a long list of failed repairs in the past, reasons why things could not be fixed or why nothing should be attempted.

But she persisted and with the help of a local electrician named Mort Donahue, funding from officials of the Campton Precinct and the help of numerous people, everything finally came together in a celebration on Sunday evening in the center of Campton.

Three hundred townspeople, kids and dogs gathered at dusk on the lawn of Artistic Roots at the stoplight in Campton. The fourteen member White Mountain Swing Band lent their saxophones and trumpets to tunes on the front porch of the store. Band leader John and his wife Priscilla Whitney live only 100 feet from the bridge. The sky had cleared after two days of hard rain and become favorable for an outdoor celebration resulting in a larger than expected crowd. Eighteen members of the Campton Garden Club were suitably attired in matching green sweatshirts with an embroidered logo including a streetlamp and the date of the night's Bridge Lighting.

Our speakers were well-received by the locals on the lawn and kept their speeches mercifully short. Mrs. Carol Lenahan was introduced and brought us up to date on the history of the bridge and current efforts to rehabilitate the area. "This bridge is the third one at this location", she said, "and constructed in 1927. The concrete arch is one of the two highest of this type in NH-Goffstown has the other. And, you'll be proud to know, *our* bridge is #1 in the state of this category judged on condition, aesthetic quality etc.-we're Number One!" *Applause*

Carol next revealed the search for the perfect lamps; first the 1927 style she discovered in an old photograph and the hunt for matching replicas; called an urban streetscape light. After all the permits and paperwork required by the state for these changes, basic repairs were still needed for the faulty wiring. Luckily a Garden Club member, Nancy Donahue, convinced her son Mort, of Donahue Electric, that he should be involved in this project. "You may have seen Mort last week," Carol told the crowd, "he and his crew were the guys dangling from ropes off the bridge; laying conduit on shelving under the bridge and then along a culvert."

"Others helped as well," she said, "Gary Walker repaired the worst of the crumbling cement crust. Gary Farina fabricated post supports for the lamps". Carol then read a list of people and businesses who donated money to help purchase the flowering mums that look so spectacular in the bridge's flower boxes.

Selectman Bill Cheney took the microphone next and offered some kind thanks for the work done by everyone.

When at last it was time to light the new lamps some very special people were chosen to 'throw the switch'. Jane Pierce, who attended every Precinct meeting for years, urging the repairs and was a long time resident in the big white building on the corner that now houses Artistic Roots. Harriet Sargeant, who has long been a proponent of the Campton bridge restoration and worked continually for it. And Florence Anderson, whose home is straight ahead when you cross the bridge, going south.

We had been warned that the lights would come on very slowly, just a glimmer at first and then up to a bright, one hundred watt glow. Once they were well started, the Band swung into, "*I'm beginning to see the light.*" A wide, yellow ribbon was stretched across the bridge road and Precinct officials, selectmen and Gary Benedix officiated at the ribbon cutting. One special person there was Chris Roberts Keating, representing her dad Pascoe Roberts and Roland Gooch. For many years Pascoe and Roland struggled with bridge and lamp repairs with little success. These men would labor

Campton Garden Club Celebration continued from page 5

with deteriorating conditions and after long days of effort the lights would work intermittently or not at all. We were glad to acknowledge their contributions and know they were celebrating with us today.

Now recent rains had swelled the Mad River and as high water roared over the Campton Dam it added it's own noisy endorsement to the proceedings.

With the ribbon cut the way was clear for the antique auto parade, some of the cars chosen because they were from the same era as our new lamps.

First through the bridge was Dave Dearborn from West Campton in his 1909 Jackson, Touring.

Dave and Bobbie Hiltz from Thornton were next in their 1923 Ford, Model T, Touring

Dave and Sandy Moulton from East Campton in their 1926 Ford, Model T, Touring.

Wendell Noble and Scott Pulsifer in a 1928 Dodge Brothers. -We were pleased to have Wendell and Mary bring their car from Milton, Vermont because it was originally purchased from the old Dodge Brothers dealership at Hibbard's Garage, W. Campton..

Mike and Laurie Benton of Thornton were in their 1929 Ford, Model A, Coupe.

Kip and Dauna Ayotte from Woodstock in their 1929 Ford, Model A, Sedan

Our local police did a careful job of guiding the old cars around the corner and getting the swarms of people across the highway.

After the auto parade the Band concluded with; *Night and Day*, and the throng headed into Campton Falls Marketplace to find tables spread with heaps of delicious desserts. Inside the Campton Garden Club had a table where they could answer questions and inform people about their Phase II plan of the Bridge Restoration which includes plantings and shrubs.

Dave Dearborn:

I came through the Bridge in my old car and when I turned left under the stoplight I couldn't believe the mob of people standing there! It's great to see so much public spirit. It was fun to be a part of it.

Mort Donahue:

The hardest part of my job was not dealing with Public Service or the physical labor like dangling over a waterfall on a rope. It was just that I had to get all my ducks in a row. No.1 had to happen, then 2, then 3.4.5 and on this job, it was really tough.

Nancy Donahue:

I wish they hadn't announced over the P.A. that I pushed my son Mort into taking this job-the HOURS he's worked on this project- I feel guilty enough already!

Campton Historical Society

www.watervillevalleyregion.com/HistoricalSociety/

P.O. Box 160, Campton, NH 03223

- Single Membership — \$12.00 Family Membership — \$20.00
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Members

- Enclosed is my check for dues.
- This check also includes a donation to support projects to be done in the Old Town Hall, headquarters of the Society.