

# Campton Historical Society

## Spring 2007

### HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR CAMPTON HISTORY?

BY WALTON STOCKWELL

Have you heard of Campton Hollow? It is one of our 18 marked historic sites.

Campton Hollow is the site of one of the early settlements in Campton.

It was the political, social, and geographic center of town.

Coming south on N.H. Route 175 for 2.7 miles from the present Upper Village, you will see a small cemetery on your right. Next to that was the Blaisdell Store and Post Office.

This was also the site of the first congregational church built in Campton. At the point in the "S" curve where Perch Pond Road bears off to the left is one of Campton's early precinct schools. The appropriately named Center School is also identified with a historic marker. As you descend the hill through the "S" curves, the W. Clark

Store was on your right. Look closely, and you can see the original road-bed along the ridge to your right. After the bridge, there was a grist mill, a blacksmith shop, and several other businesses.

The concrete bridge spans the Beebe River, originating up in Sandwich Notch, and emptying into the Pemigewasset River. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> bridge at this site, the original being a covered bridge, followed in 1905 by an iron one. On the left as you descend the hill is a small scenic waterfall, which may be viewed by following a difficult and dangerous trail from the small parking area.

Further along route 175, you will see



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### CAMPTON'S BLAIR CHAPEL BY SCOTT PULSIFER

We talked with Leah Gray a few weeks ago and asked her some questions about her interesting home, which was at one time the Blair Chapel. Leah thinks the Chapel was built around 1883 and may have had its grand opening in 1889. Clearly from some old pictures, it was built in several stages. The horse sheds were there from the first (you can just make out someone

shingling up on the roof in the earliest picture). Leah says there are still posters on the walls of the sheds advertising horse liniment along with many people's initials. As far as we know it was a



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nondenominational church and was built for the convenience of the guests staying at Blair's House hotel. The present Congregational

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# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Mon. 4/16	"Cannon Shenanigans -New Hampshire's Muster Days Traditions" Presented by Jack Noon of Warner, N.H.
Mon. 5/21	"Logging Railroads Along the Pemigewasset River" Author Bill Gove of Williamstown, Vt. discusses his most recent railroad book
Sat. 6/2	Concert and Pasta Supper, featuring Rodney Miller and David Surette
Mon. 6/18	"The Ballad Lives" presented by John Perrault on guitar - Traditional old world ballads and New England story songs.
Mon. 7/16	"Petticoat Patriot" by Joan Gatturna of Hingham, Ma. - The story of Deborah Samson Gannett, a woman in the Continental Army
Mon. 8/20	David Switzer, Prof. Emeritus at PSU presents "Bringing Home the Last of her Breed" - A talk about the great age of sail, clipper ships, privateers and pirates
Mon. 9/17	"Treasures of New Hampshire" by Wesley Balla of the Museum of N.H. History - He will show highlights of objects and memorabilia of the N.H. Historical Society
Sat. 10/2	Annual Heritage Day and Silent Auction
Mon. 10/15	"Stark Decency, German Prisoners of War", by Allen Koop of New London, NH - The experience of 300 WW2 prisoners of war in a small N.H. village
Mon. 11/19	"Winter Storytelling", a look at seasonal holiday celebrations throughout history - Michael Harris of Gilmanston, NH brings a blend of lore, laughter, song and story
December	No program meeting

Changes can happen throughout the year. **PLEASE** check the newspapers, or go to our web site for the latest information.

Tammy Kidney, ace volunteer, painted the new Blair Bridge signs with the help of her family. THANKS!!!



Paul Yelle, President

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## DID YOU KNOW? THAT CAMPTON HAD A MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT IN THE CIVIL WAR?

I recently had a request from a student in Connecticut, who was doing research on Abraham Cohn. A week later, I received another request about him from an author in Rhode Island. We had nothing in our files, but a web search produced the following.

Abraham was born in East Prussia in 1832. He came to the United States at age 28, and settled in Campton. He enlisted as a Private in Company E, 6<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire Volunteers in Campton in January 1864, and was promoted to Sergeant Major that March. During the Battle of Wilderness in May, the Union General Wadsworth fell mortally wounded, causing his troops to head for the rear. It was at this time that Sergeant Major Cohn displayed "conspicuous gallantry in rallying and forming under heavy fire, disorganized and flying troops of different regiments". He cajoled and coerced these men to stand and fight with the 6<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire. These rag-tag elements were brought together and formed into a defensive line that brought Longstreet's counteroffensive to a standstill.

Abraham Cohn served with the 6<sup>th</sup> N.H. until he was mustered out in July 1865 as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. He moved to New York after the war and died there in 1897 at age 65. He is buried in the Cypress Hills Cemetery. ( more information may be found at [www.jewish-history.com/civilwar/sergeant\\_cohn.html](http://www.jewish-history.com/civilwar/sergeant_cohn.html))

*Walt Stockwell, Librarian*



### CAMPTON HOLLOW - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the 1855 Town House, the site of town government for many years. It has now been preserved and updated, and is the home of the Campton Historical Society. Just after that is the Campton Congregational Church. This was originally built on the west side of the Pemigewasset River,

and moved to its' present location in 1858. The Town Farm (for indigents) was down on the river plain, behind these two structures. In later years, the E.H. Kennistont Store was just beyond the church.

Near Campton Hollow was the Christopher Marsh Farm. One of his sons, Sylvester Marsh, designed and built the famous Cog Railway to the summit of Mount Washington. If you follow Perch Pond Road for 3 miles, you will see the Bump Covered Bridge, also a marked historic site.

### CAMPTON'S BLAIR CHAPEL - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Church was disassembled and moved across the river to its present location in 1858 so there would have been no church on the west side of the river. The first covered bridge was built at Blair in 1829. We know the chapel was used as a church at least up through 1922 because Russell Palmer remembers going to a Christmas party that was held there at that time.

Leah's parents, Dr. Fred and Mrs. Maude Gray bought the now unused Chapel in 1929. Dr. Gray was a veterinarian and treated Parker Young logging horses and cattle at various farms around the Pemigewasset Valley. The Grays lived in a little house across the road in what is now the Red Sleigh a-frame office, while the chapel was being renovated. Leah's mother, Maude Gray, drew up all the plans to renovate the Chapel into an inn. They contracted with Mr. Hoffman to be their carpenter and Dr. Gray worked right along with him. Dr. Gray tried to return as many of the pews and fixtures in the chapel to the original owners. At the time the Chapel was built it was customary for people to "buy" (or sponsor) a pew. One of the stained glass windows was made by Schuyler Mathews and was a likeness of the Madonna. It was returned to Schuyler Mathews. He used his mother as a model when he had made the window.

One July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend during the renovation, a young couple came to the Grays looking for a place to stay. Mrs. Gray provided them blankets and pillows and let them sleep on the pews in the church. By 1932 the new inn was ready. They considered calling it "Chapel Inn" but decided that sounded too "churchy" so they decided to call it "Woodland Rooms and Cabins". Leah's Mom painted the sign. Tourism in the White Mountains was "in" again. They charged \$1 per person per night. There was a full bath upstairs (pretty fancy for 1930) for the guests to use and a half bath downstairs where Leah and her family lived. There were two cabins that they built at that time for more guests.

Dr. Gray died in 1935 and Leah's Mom went back to school to get her teaching certificate at Plymouth Normal School. She then taught at Livermore Falls School (CHS site marker S- 14) for many years. They tried to stay at Woodlands year round, but ended up taking a small apartment up over Rand's Hardware for the winter months. Mrs. Gray also taught herself how to drive Dr. Gray's 1932 Pontiac.

Woodlands ran until 1982 at which time rooms were \$10 per night. Leah and her mother made many lasting friendships with the guests that returned year after year. Leah still receives flowers from a woman who spent summers at Woodlands with her grandparents.

Thanks, Leah. We enjoyed this trip down Campton's memory lane.



# Campton Historical Society

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## VALUABLE ARTIFACTS RECOVERED

We were pleased recently to add some valuable artifacts to our collections. These were four large leather bound cash ledgers from Draper Corp. in Beebe River, covering the years 1944-1966. These beautifully hand-written entries include everything from purchase of War Bonds to Waleeco candy bars. They will give us a vivid description of work life there. Take a look at the one on display on our Beebe River exhibit. They are fun and interesting reading, and you might recognize some familiar names.

We were able to get these through the sharp eyes of one of our members, Stuart Pitts. He had been doing work in a house undergoing some remodeling in Waterville Valley. He noticed these journals lying on the floor in the boiler room. Recognizing their significance, he was able to arrange to get them for us through the present out-of-state owner of the property. It is not the first time that Stuart has found historic treasures. Also in our files is a building floor plan for the Odd Fellows Building, which he found in the walls of a house in the village. Thank you Stuart for your historic sense.

As I have said before, I know that these types of things are out there. They may be in the basement, in the attic, in a closet, in a drawer. Take a look around. We need to complete and preserve our record of Campton history. We would be most pleased to add your artifact(s) to our growing collection, either as a donation or on loan. We do have a secure, environmentally proper facility for these items. We would like to share them and learn from them about our heritage. Call me anytime to discuss arrangements.

**Walt Stockwell, Curator**  
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