

Grantham Historical Society

www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org



Fall 2016

NEWSLETTER



Ken Story

THE COMMON IN GRANTHAM VILLAGE—A SMALL, GOOD PLACE

Common spaces – or commons – are as old as America itself. The nation’s oldest public space, Boston Common, dates to 1634. Americans have always believed in the value of shared,

Although slightly smaller now due to modern road widening on all sides, the common remains open and undeveloped, except for the occasional yard sale sign, the scarecrows that have become such a fixture of fall, and the political campaign signs so ubiquitous this time of year.

In many ways, the common has benefitted from its small size, as it has never been large enough to host a building of any usefulness, in spite of the vast commercial potential of its location at what was at one time an extremely busy intersection.

The oldest historic photograph we have of it, dating from 1908, was taken from

publicly owned spaces in the middle of our communities, whether for grazing animals, or hosting burial grounds, or for recreation and relaxation. Significantly more diminutive, yet no less symbolic, is the small, triangular open space located at the intersection of Routes 10 and 114 in the center of Grantham Village.

Less than a tenth of an acre in size, the Grantham common owes its existence to the intersection of these two major thoroughfares and the fact that access to and from each was in such demand – during the days of horse and buggy, just as now in the age of the automobile – that not one but two separate access points were required to handle the traffic turning from one road onto the other. This fork in Route 114 was largely created to allow traffic turning from Route 114 onto Route 10 separate access depending upon whether the traveler was turning north or south, effectively preventing the bottleneck created by a single intersection serving both. The fortuitous by-product of this convenience was the small, open patch of ground in-between.



Grantham Village, looking north.

the center of Route 10, looking north. It shows the Ira Walker Store to the left and the George Walker Store to right, along with its associated stables; not visible is the drug store just off-camera to the right. A later photograph, probably dating from the mid-1930s, taken from the northwest corner of the intersection of Dunbar Hill Road with Route 10, shows the opposite view. The two store buildings are visible in the foreground, and what appears to be the remains of the rubble foundation of the drug store is seen just beyond the common. What is interesting is how similar the common looks in both photographs; it has hardly changed at all, with the exception of the small tree (now long gone) in the center of the common in the later photograph. In

...continued on page 4

CRANBERRIES IN GRANTHAM?

Believe it or not, there are cranberries on Anderson Pond right here in Grantham. Another place where I get one to three pounds of cranberries every year, is quite near but it is a secret....don't tell anyone...

The cranberry plant, *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, is a native plant found in acidic bogs. It is an evergreen trailing vine with pink flowers. The plants are pollinated by honey bees and native bees such as the bumble bee. (No bees, no cranberries!) After pollination, a white berry is formed and turns red upon maturity. The name cranberry came about when the colonists thought the cranberry flower looked like a crane's head.

There are many interesting dates concerning the development of the cranberry industry but a very



Cranberry flowers



The Cranberry

important discovery was the health benefits of the red berry. It was noted that cranberries are high in antioxidants and appear to provide some protection against Alzheimer's disease. The antioxidant properties may provide anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer benefits. Cranberries may also prevent urinary tract infections, promote gastrointestinal and oral health, lower LDL and raise HDL levels and aid in the recovery from stroke! There is some thought that the benefits come mostly from eating whole fresh berries. SO EAT UP!

—Renée Gustafson

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE CRANBERRY

1550 — Native Americans used cranberries as food in pemmican and as a wound dressing and a dye. They called it "sassamanash".

1633 — Mary Ring auctioned her cranberry dyed petticoat for 16 shillings.

1643 — The book *A Key into the Language of America* mentions cranberries.

1663 — A recipe for cranberry sauce was found in a pilgrim cookbook.

1667 — A New Englander sent King Charles II ten barrels of cranberries—one barrel = 100 pounds

1800s (early) — Cranberries are grown and harvested in the Cape Cod region.

1816 — Captain Henry Hall discovered a way to transport and cultivate cranberries in Dennis, Massachusetts.

1838—Flooding was used to control insects and prevent damage due to frost.

1887 — The "snap scoop" was invented and was the first tool used in harvesting.

1890s—A wooden cranberry scoop was invented.

1920—The first mechanical harvester was invented.

THE GNOMES HAVE INVADED GRANTHAM!

Perhaps you have not seen little creatures (less than 6 inches high) running around in our town—but they are here. They are twilight and night lovers—they have no need to be seen unless they want you to see them. They are family oriented beings, and are always doing good in a mischievous and wise way. Ancients have seen them on occasion. They could be called stewards of the forest and are self-sufficient. They have good souls and are always helping animals and people in unknown ways.

You ask, "Where in Grantham are they?" I have seen signs of them in Grantham Village, Eastman and in our new Brookside Park. They probably can be found in other places too—let me know if you see one!

Gnomes have a long and decorated history. There are several stories of origin, probably due to the variation of gnomes by regions. But let there be no mistake, according to Dutch Will Huygen's Gnome book & illustrated by Rien Poortvliet¹, they are not dwarfs, trolls or goblins as some people would have you believe.

In AD 470, a Roman sergent, Publius Octavus, owned a villa and farm in the woods. He wrote this description, "Today I saw a miniature person with my own eyes. He wore a red cap and blue shirt. He had a white beard and green pants. He said that he had lived in this land for 20 years.



Grantham's Gnome House

He spoke our language, mixed with strange words. Since then I have spoken with the little man many times."²



There are other stories of Gnome origin, such as garden gnomes, small figurines made in Italy during the 13th century. Gnomes in gardens (larger statues made of wood, terracotta or ceramic) began appearing in the nineteenth century and continues to this day, but are now made

of resins. Garden gnomes were supposed to come at night to weed and tend people's gardens. But that is a small feat compared to all the

ways gnomes help people. There is a gnome in Lamport Hall in England

dated to 1847. He is insured for 1 million pounds.³

In the late nineteenth century they became a popular decorative representation in American gardens. Most were made in Germany but the products fell out of favor with American consumers during the early 1930s. Some historians credit the resurgence in gnome décor in the US with the arrival of Walt Disney's first feature film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)—an insult to gnomes?

In Grantham, a gnome house, statue and sign are visible to anyone who looks hard enough. It is said that gnomes prefer the simpler life, therefore they are shy and are found mostly in our natural areas left undisturbed by our technological progress. But because we are slowly redefining our outlook on "nature's treasures, there is some hope that gnomes will begin to move about



Solus, the 17.7 ft. garden gnome.

more freely. More and more people are beginning to realize that they have a neglected but forgiving and wise mother in nature. These people will undoubtedly meet gnomes.⁴

Treat yourself and borrow the book,

Gnomes, by W. Huygen from the Dunbar Free Library. You will laugh, find solutions, and learn to appreciate the finer things in life. I also have a copy and have cherished it for years when I bought and read it to my children 60 years ago. Now I am addicted, and will never give it away.

Enjoy—a gnome may be watching and laughing with you!

—Rae Tober

1., 2., 4., Huygen, Wil (Author), Poortvliet, Rien (illustrator) *Gnomes*, Harry Abrams, Inc. Publishers, NY, 3. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/36143.stm/Gnomes

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Historical Society has enough projects to take us into the 22nd century. We always need help and have large and small independent projects as well as opportunities to help the current volunteer staff with on-going work. Call an officer or Board member or stop in some Friday afternoon—we will always be happy to see you!

2017 DUES ARE DUE AND 2016 ALMOST OVERDUE...

The Grantham Historical Society dues for 2017 will be due on January 1, 2017.

If you have not yet paid your 2016 dues, please cut out and use the form on page 3 to send it in. If you are not sure whether you have paid your 2016 dues or not, please contact our treasurer, Kathi Osgood, who will be happy to check her records. Her phone number and email address can be found on page 6. Thanks for your support!

HANGING AND DRYING

Have the clothespins and line clean. Hang clothes of a kind together and wrong side out. Hang the garments by bands, belts or seams. White clothes should be hung in the sun; it whitens them. Colored and woolen garment should be hung in the shade. Knitted and crocheted articles should be laid flat and dried indoors. White silk stockings should be dried in the dark or they will turn yellow. Roll silk waists in a heavy Turkish towel and let them stay for at least an hour, then iron.

[Oh for an electric dryer—a what!]

From Neighborly Advice by Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co.-no date

GRANTHAM VILLAGE *Continued from page 1*

both pictures it is little more than a patch of unimproved lawn, seemingly impervious to the vicissitudes of time.

And so it remains today, with only the addition of some curbing. While some may laugh at how it appears as almost an afterthought, and tout the benefits of other such larger, more expansive public spac-

es as the Town Forest or the new Brookside Park, the common survives as mute testimony to the value we have placed upon open spaces over time, and the quiet beauty we have found there – especially in the middle of civilization, where we need them most.

—Ken Story



Grantham Village, looking south

GRANTHAM MARCH 11, 1852

“In presenting this Report we are happy to say...the schools of this town for the past year have been better managed than has generally been the case. Ten of the eleven schools have been under the instruction of females...It has been a question...whether it was good policy to employ female teachers in our Winter schools. It is now understood that we cannot obtain the services of our best male teachers for the wages we pay...When your committee...gave their opinion that females had better natural qualifications for teaching than gentlemen, many doubted...;but we must say...the experience of the past year is proof, the advantage is on the side of female teachers. The orderliness is in striking contrast...formerly observed...A delicacy in scholars prevents...vulgar...language...”

Comments?

VISIT US ON THE WEB
WWW.GRANTHAMHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE GRANTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE ELECTION OF TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND A VOLUNTEER. THEY ARE:

NATE CAREY

Although I was born in Claremont, I consider myself a Grantham native because my grandparents lived in Grantham and I spent as much time with them as possible. My grandmother was the Grantham post mistress and my grandfather was an auctioneer, landlord, and entrepreneur of some repute. Grantham during the 1950s and 60s was my center of the universe. I graduated from Stevens High School in Claremont and attended Keene State College. After college I became a police officer working for the City of Lebanon and later the City of Dover. From police work I went into building construction and related industries. My wife and I have lived in Grantham since the early 1980 and we enjoy the rural lifestyle from our home on Howe Hill.

KELLY SPILLER

I relocated with my family from the CT shoreline, and graduated from Lebanon High school in 1998. After living in Lebanon for a handful of years, in 2002 I moved with my husband, to Grantham. We purchased the Grantham Village home known as the Rose Reney House in 2005. I am the Grantham Branch Manager at Lake Sunapee Bank. My husband, Gerry, owns All-Ways Moving LLC in Grantham, and our daughter, Madeline, is a 6th grader at GVS. I enjoy the natural beauty and small town charm that is Grantham.

ANN WANTUCH

Hi, my name is Ann Wantuch. I was born to a large extended family in Neenah, Wisconsin (home of cheese & rich, rich ice cream). My family moved to CT when I was 11 and I spent lots of time in NYC (45 minutes, 45 cents to the city). After marriage in CT where my two sons were born, we moved to Newton before NH. Needless to say I went to UCONN. We have lived here 23 years and love it. My career was in computers and my boys say I'm a 'geek'. My interests are in genealogy, history, scrapbooking and lot of different crafts, which I really enjoy doing with others. I hope to see you at the Historical Society!

It is better to give.

Your membership fees and end-of-year donations will help the Grantham Historical Society develop programs, exhibits and educational materials for anyone interested in the history of Grantham. All donations are tax-deductible and include receipt of our newsletter.

Please mail to:
Grantham Historical Society
P.O. Box 540
Grantham, NH 03753

Thank you for your support.

Membership and Annual Dues Form Grantham Historical Society

Name _____

Mailing address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

New member Annual renewal

Annual dues: (check one)

- Individual (\$15.)
- Family (\$25.)
- Patron/business/institution (\$50.)

Extra contribution _____

Total check amount _____

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016—2017 GRANTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 540, Grantham, NH 03753, 603-863-9701

PRESIDENT

Ken Story
P.O. Box 52
603-359-4405
kbyrdstory@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Rae Tober
P.O. Box 625
603-731-9790
raetober@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Christina McKahan
P.O. Box 536
mckahanc@gmail.com

TREASURER

Kathi Osgood
P.O. Box 246
603-863-4726
kgood246@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

Kelly Spiller
P.O. Box 214
603-863-5211
kparkernh@yahoo.com

Nate Carey
P.O. Box 27
Grantham, NH 03753
603-863-2915
ncarey@myfairpoint.net

Dwight Wilder
96 Silo Lane
Grantham, NH 03753
603-865-5345
dswldr@comcast.net

TOWN ARCHIVIST

Rae Tober
P.O. Box 625
603-731-9790
granthamarchives@gmail.com

*The Grantham Historical Society and Town Archives are open
on Friday afternoons from 1:00–4:00 PM or by appointment.*

The building is located at 34 Dunbar Hill Road.

Email: granthamhistory@gmail.com

Website: www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: Grantham Historical Society

**BUY YOUR
CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
AT GHS!**



**FOR SALE: GHS Note
Cards, both Christmas
and occasional, and a
Grantham ornament**

The ornament (3 1/2" square) is a year-round gift perfect for tabletop display (with optional stand), or hanging on a window or tree or on a tree during the holidays. Each ornament comes boxed and ready for gift giving. The ornament is designed in miniature for Grantham with the following sites: Bouldervale Barn, Chapel at Old Farms, Village Church, Dunbar Free Library, Eastman Sign, Maxwell Inn, and Old Grantham Village School.

