

# Grantham Historical Society

www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org



Winter/Spring  
2015—2016

## NEWSLETTER



Ken Story

### A “MODERN COMMUTER’S RESIDENCE” IN GRANTHAM —FIFTY YEARS LATER

In 1967, as the town prepared for its bicentennial, part of the celebration included the publication of the town’s first formal history. Grantham native and local historian Amah Howard coordinated

the effort; in the process, she collected dozens of historic photographs to illustrate the book and bring the town’s story to life. However, not all the photographs were from the past. In addition to the many images of old buildings, some surviving and some gone, Ms. Howard believed it important also to recognize how we build today.

The example she included, built in 1965, was the recently completed home of Lorene and F. Robert Osgood on Pillsbury Road, a home they constructed for their young family and which they have occupied ever since.

Springfield native Lorene (better known as “Tink,” a nickname she picked up via her father Loren, after whom she was named and who was himself nicknamed “Tinker Tom” by his grandmother) and Bob married on May 9, 1964. Bob, born in Unity, moved to Grantham about 1950, in time for him to enroll in seventh grade. Born to Irene and Russell Osgood, Bob was the second of five children. After they married they lived on Howe Hill in her family home, where they had their first child – their son Chris - while searching for a lot on which to build a new home of their own.

They settled upon a six-acre parcel on the south side of Pillsbury Road (which intersects Route 10 directly across from the Lake Sunapee Bank), which they purchased from Jack Pillsbury. At the time there were only four

residences on Pillsbury Road: Bernice and Jack Pillsbury’s residence (of which only the stone foundation remains, located at the corner of Pillsbury Road and Route 10), Katia and Carly Benoit’s residence, a residence owned at the time by Evie and Mike Reney, and the Pillsbury family residence at the end of the road, now occupied by Alden

“Chick” Pillsbury. Originally Jack hesitated to sell his entire field, as he wanted a spot to pasture his horse. When Tink and Bob offered to buy only the upper section, leaving him plenty of grazing area closer to his residence, he agreed.

Tink and Bob contracted with LaValley’s of Newport to build

one of their first manufactured homes. LaValley’s erected the shell and exterior finishes only; Bob finished the interior, installing all but the heating, electrical, tile and cabinets. While an artesian well was considered, local residents Francie Tucker and Art Carver each ‘dowsed’ the property, and both discovered water at the same location. Bob and his younger brother Paul dug down twenty-five feet at that very spot, and struck a water supply that has provided water to the home ever since.

Bob and Tink had two more sons (Marshall and Shane) after moving into this house, and for years Bob commuted from here to his job at Split Ball Bearing in Lebanon (now Timken Aerospace). In the meantime, Bob began a long tradition of giving back to the town of Grantham. Bob has served on the Grantham Fire Department, two terms on the school board, on the committee that oversaw the construction of the Grantham Village School, even as a school bus driver. Moreover, Bob served



Osgood Residence, 2016

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLE BELOW

In March of 2016, I was contacted by Pam Kocher, a NH resident, and was informed that her mother, Edith, was a teacher at the North Grantham School from 1937 to 1940. Edith was interested in recording her memoirs and Pam asked me if the Grantham Historical Society would be interested in her story about Edith.

The following story, written by Edith Wallace Burns, who will be 100 years old on September 25, 2016, is presented below. Edith now lives in Georgia and no longer has to suffer the freezing cold as she describes in the story. If there is anyone who reads this Newsletter and remembers Edith, please contact me at the Society. Read and delight in the story of a teacher at North Grantham School in the late 1930s.

—Rae Tober

## THE NORTH GRANTHAM ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE (AND ME)

As I approach my 100th birthday, I have a treasure chest of memories and among my happiest is the time I spent with my North Grantham students and with the wonderfully kind and generous Grantham community.

It all started in the spring of 1937 as I prepared to graduate from Plymouth Teachers College. As was the custom in those days, superintendents from surrounding school districts traveled to the College to interview prospective teachers. My first interview was with the Superintendent of the school district that served the town of Grantham; there was a need for an elementary teacher at the North Grantham school.

Though I don't remember much of the interview, he immediately offered me the position and a starting salary of \$800 annually. Inasmuch as my pre-graduation weekly allowance was \$1.00 (remember then a sundae at Newberry's was only 15 cents), I was thrilled with the offer and after talking it over with my mother, gratefully accepted it.

Being an optimist by nature, I was not concerned, and did not consider, that I had no car and no public transportation to deliver me to this little country village close to the Vermont border. However, my naivety proved to be providence as I was warmly received by families of Grantham.

With a ride from my future husband, I arrived in Grantham a day before school was to open in the fall of 1937 and went to the school to decorate and hang curtains for the first day of school. Once there I found a

schoolhouse with no electricity or running water, as was the case throughout North Grantham. There was a wood stove, lots of blackboard space, and reading books for the children.

Although I had a stint of practice teaching in the fourth grade while at college, what faced me on that first day of school in North Grantham were too many boys and girls, grade one through eight, and I felt I didn't have a clue what I was doing! However, they were all nice children, and together we bungled our way through those first days, and I finally got the hang of it. The older kids helped the younger children learn. There were two students to every desk, which was helpful as this arrangement enabled me to sit down to help a student experiencing difficulty with a subject. When I stop and think about it, I wasn't much older than my eighth grade students, and we all shared the

experience of trudging to school together—some walked miles—no matter the weather, carried our lunches, and shared the same two-holer, which was a part of the school building, to meet nature's necessity. It wasn't until the end of my three years teaching in North Grantham that I learned the boys had punched a hole in the wall of the two-holer and had been enjoying the view! Some things never change . . .

And speaking of things that never change—while I had three years of the nicest children as my students, not every one of them exhibited perfect behavior every day.



*North Grantham School, Class of 1938*

*Continued on page 3*

## SCHOOLHOUSE (AND ME) *Continued from page 2*

I recall that one day one of the boys decided he was going to spend the morning throwing spitballs rather than paying attention to his classes. So when recess time rolled around, I kept him inside and made him spend the entire time making, throwing, and then picking up spitballs. I think his mouth was pretty dry by the end of recess, and he never threw another spitball during school!

Though many of my students came from very poor families and often had little to eat for lunch, their families were hard working, generous in spirit, and honest as the day is long. I remember one young boy, a little first grader, had only a "mustard sandwich" (two slices of bread with nothing but mustard between them) for lunch and was so hungry he stole a hot dog from another child. When his mother learned of his transgression, she got him to the nearest police station for a stern talking to, and stated, "No child of mine will grow up to be a thief."

From the beginning the number of my students was beyond the school's capacity, and the School Board moved grades 7 and 8 to the two-room school in Grantham village, leaving me with just 6 grades to teach – a cinch! But fortunately that was just a temporary situation, and the next year the school went back to eight grades. I really enjoyed those older, smart young people.

The children and I were blessed in so many ways, but the fact that each morning, together, we could salute the flag, say the Lord's Prayer, and share an inspirational reading was the greatest blessing of all. It was a privilege taken for granted at that time and, of course, sadly no longer allowed.

Arrangements had been made for me to room and board with the Chairman of the North Grantham School Board who, with her husband, had a wonderful family with several children. I paid \$6.00 a week and was given their bedroom on the first floor while they went upstairs to sleep with the children. Theirs was a prosperous farm so there was always an abundance of good food. I recall that one day the kids kept at me to milk a cow, so finally I reluctantly agreed to give it a try. I got one squirt out and promptly said I'd done it and that was it. I didn't

like the feel of it, and to this day it was my one and only experience milking a cow!

Being a small, rural community with no access to the outside world and with none of today's technology to amuse us, it fell upon us to make our own entertainment. Demonstrations of learning by the students and parties at the school for the children and their parents happened often. We often performed our little plays and pageants at the Grantham Town Hall, which had a stage and electricity!

Even the parents of my students got in on the act, so to speak, and performed a three act play entitled *Goin' Modern*. Though it was most likely their first and only experience with acting, they loved it and were a big hit! Charging a small admission fee for these events, we eventually had enough money to buy a used set of encyclopedia for our school.

At the end of my first year teaching, another lady offered me room and board at her house. Her husband had tacked cardboard to the rafters in the attic to "finish off" a room for me. While this arrangement was agreeable to everyone as it meant the

Chairman of the School Board and her husband could once again have their bedroom back, I damned near froze to death. Even my cold cream (that would be facial moisturizer in today's parlance) and pee in the chamber pot froze overnight!

Nevertheless my landlady and I had some fun. One Halloween, she and I cut up a bar of Ivory soap into squares and dipped them in chocolate. We then offered this tasty treat to her husband who was a huge man, a loner type who spent all his spare time by the stove in the barn. Much to our amazement (and horror) he did not bite into the squares – just popped all of them, one right after another, in his mouth whole and swallowed! It obviously came out alright as he lived through it – we decided he had to be the cleanest man in town!

Having no contact with the outside world, we had no idea that the strong winds of 1938 were a hurricane wreaking widespread havoc throughout New Hampshire. We only knew that one night a very strong wind hit our area. The next morning, the children and I walked to school,



*Edie's 99th Birthday*

## DIGITIZED NEWSPAPERS

At the Richards Free Library in Newport NH is a searchable digital version of newspapers which span nearly 150 years.

The papers include the Argus Champion and its relatives dating from 1860 to 2008, such as the New Hampshire Argus & Spectator, The Tuesday Argus, The Whip & Spur, the Newport Guardian and Kearsarge Sunapee Sun and the Newport-Lake Sunapee Times. The Claremont-based News Leader from 1994-2000 is also included.

Firsthand accounts of birth, marriages, deaths, celebrations such as Old Home Day, news stories, voting results, and countless other local issues are covered.

The digitized collection is online at richards.advantage-preservation.com. The link is also accessible from the library's website.

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## WHAT A FARMER NEEDED TO KNOW IN 1858:

### HOW MANY POUNDS TO A BUSHEL?

- Of wheat sixty pounds.
- Of shelled corn fifty pounds
- Of corn on the cob seventy pounds.
- Of rye fifty-six pounds.
- Of oats thirty-two pounds.
- Of barley forty pounds.
- Of clover seed sixty pounds.
- Of timothy seed forty-five pounds.
- Of hemp seed fourteen pounds
- Of buckwheat fifty-two pounds.
- Of blue grass seed fourteen pounds.
- Of castor bean forty-six pounds.
- Of onions fifty-seven pounds.
- Of salt fifty-six pounds.

## OSGOOD HOUSE *Continued from page 1*

for over forty years on the Grantham Police Department.

And yet, nothing bears greater testimony to their love of our town than the fact that they have remained here; and not just in town, but in the same building they built when they were just starting out. They have made a number of improvements to be sure, including the recent addition of a fireplace insert purchased from the Howard estate, but this house remains their

headquarters, the place that continues to root them to Grantham.

When Tink and Bob first married, she told him that she'd live anywhere he wanted, just as long as it wasn't Grantham. Thankfully we all change, and most of us are capable of reconsideration when the right reasons present themselves. All of us should be grateful that Tink and



*Osgood House, 1965*

Bob found good reason to consider Grantham home. They have never looked back.

—Ken Story

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## SCHOOLHOUSE *Continued from page 3*

climbing over fallen tree limbs and uprooted trunks, and spent our usual day at school. We may have been the only school open in the state that day. We didn't need open roads and electricity – One of those cases of, "You never miss what you never had!"

After three happy years spent with such fantastic children and their families, my longtime boyfriend, Gordon, convinced me to marry him – maybe because he kept complaining about the three cars he wore out courting me off and on for 7 years.

All those wonderful parents, pros-

perous and poor, gave me a surprise shower to remember for the rest of my life – and gave me a gift of a Seth Thomas mantle clock. I was so humbled and appreciative. They had even arranged for my mother and aunt, who lived in Whitefield, to be there.

Here I am in my 100th year, and thank God that I still remember my exceptional students and their parents-- solid citizens all, living simple lives, raising good families, and playing an unforgettable and important role in my life.

—Edith Wallace Burns, Spring 2016

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## FROM THE ARCHIVE OF GRANTHAM HISTORY

The tame bear at Chester Walker's on Dunbar Hill was the mascot of Sherley Roberts who had a sawmill and cut lumber at Walker's. He took the bear wherever he sawed. Early 1900s

# THE HISTORY OF BEES AND THEIR EVOLUTIONARY PARTNER: FLOWERS

Flowering plants developed 125 - 100 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period as did the pollinating insects. In many instance flowering plants and insects coevolved, certain plants needed certain types of insects such as insects with a long tongue or a certain mouth piece.

First Century BC a Roman campaign led by Pompeii against the Heptakometes stopped their march to eat some honey which was left by the opposition. The locals knew that honey produced at a certain time of year was toxic to humans.

In 946 AD Saint Olga fed intoxicating mead made from a honey base to her enemies and slew them in their intoxicated state.

During the Revolutionary War, there is a tale of Charity Crabtree who beat her hives to prevent the English from capturing her before she could warn General Washington of their plans.

In the Civil War, Southern artillery fired into a row of bee hives while the Union troops were nearby.

So you see bees have quite an historical background and now we have to give history a little help because the pollinators are in decline. Pollinators are honey bees, bumble bees, bee lookalikes, butterflies, moths, wasps and any other type of pollinator.

Grantham is off to a great start in helping the pollinators! The "Bees, Butterflies and Bloom" program was kicked off with an evening talk by Lionel Chute, the District Manager

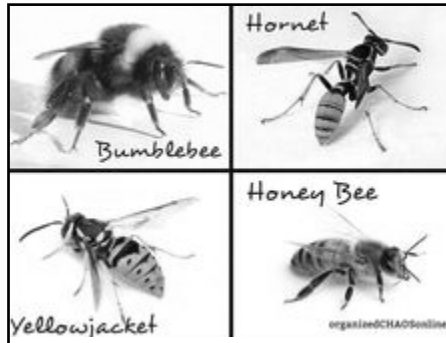
for Sullivan County Conservation and Sara Zahendra, a field biologist from the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, telling us about the pollinators and what we can do to help them, followed by a morning presentation by Cathy Neal

from UNH Cooperative Education speaking to the Garden Club on creating gardens for bees. The best part of the program happened at the Grantham Village School where the 2nd and 3rd grade had a hands on program all about bees. If you missed any of this find a 2nd and 3rd grader and ask about bees!

The program is on going with many programs geared to our younger bee experts. It seems many people in town are talking about planting for the bees. According to the latest studies, the best advice is choosing a diversity of plants that bloom throughout the spring and summer and plant in clusters. Abundance and diversity matter more than whether a species is native or exotic. Many people still believe native species to be the most beneficial and if you believe that pollinating insects and flowering plants coevolved maybe the bee will not recognize the new exotics? One thing we do know is that herbicides and pesticides are harmful to our pollinators. Neonics (neonicotinoides) are systemic pesticides that that are taken up by the plant and remain in the leaves, flowers, roots and stems as well as pollen and nectar. Many think this is the number one killer of our bees.

The town Library has a great selection of books on bees for children and adults.

—Renee Gustafson



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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*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](mailto:granthamhistory@gmail.com)

Website: [www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org)

Facebook: Grantham Historical Society

## Spring ANNUAL MEETING Thurs., May 19, 2016



*Dr. Bob Goodby*

Abenaki history required the culture of NH Native Americans to go “underground”. Dr. Robert Goodby, Associate professor of Anthropology reveals their deep presence hiding inches below the earth’s surface. Dr. Goodby holds a PhD in anthropology, and is a trustee of the Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum in Warner. Recent he and his students from Franklin Pierce College were involved in the discovery of artifacts of Native people on a island in Eastman Lake. Come, listen, and learn about archaeology as Dr. Goodby presents “Digging Into Native History in New Hampshire”.

**Town Hall lower level  
Potluck supper 6 PM  
Meeting 6:45 PM  
& Program 7 PM**

