

Grantham Historical Society

www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org



Spring 2011

NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Ken Story

Spring has finally sprung—or so it appears—and the earth brims with renewal. So it is with the Grantham Historical Society. We come out of hibernation, into the sun, ready to begin another year of inquiry, of investigation, and of celebration.

It's time to renew our commitment to our town and its past, and to share that with current and future members.

We begin with this newsletter. 2011 is the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. Grantham may seem removed from the hallowed battlefields of Virginia, Tennessee and Mississippi, but New Hampshire soldiers fought in all those places. Part of our effort to write the new history of Grantham includes substantial attention to our veterans and all the wars in which they fought; yet it would be hard to argue that any conflict was more influential in the shaping of our nation and the people we would become than the 'War Between The States.' This issue of the newsletter draws attention to the Grantham veterans in that war and the roles they played. However, it also seeks to uncover more information about those men and their service, and invites anyone to contact us if they have stories we do not know. As always, we also invite you to share pictures, artifacts, documents, and anything else that will help us more fully tell the story of our town in the Civil War.

As spring unfolds, we have upcoming events to which we invite one and all. On Thursday, May 19, we'll hold our annual meeting, at which Dr. Allen V. Koop, Visiting Professor of History at Dartmouth College, will deliver

the presentation "Stark Decency: New Hampshire's World War II German Prisoner of War Camp." This talk focuses on the former WWII-era German POW camp in northern New Hampshire and how those prisoners interacted with the local community and its economy. We're excited to have Dr. Koop speak to us on this little-known facet of New Hampshire history. A pot-luck dinner begins at 6:00pm, followed by a short business meeting at 6:45. The presentation will begin at 7pm.

On Saturday, July 9, the historical society joins with the town to celebrate the long-standing contributions and commitment to Grantham history of retiring town and GHS archivist Lea Frey. For the last fifteen years Lea has devoted herself to identifying, labeling and cataloging a broad variety of documents relating to Grantham history. Her careful and thorough handling of these priceless papers has earned the gratitude of everyone who cares about our past. As sorry as we are to see her retire, we are excited for her and husband Conrad (himself a former GHS treasurer) and what their future holds. We refuse to say

good-bye, as she's staying right here in Grantham, but we very much want to wish her well. Please come join us for a relaxed and informal opportunity to chat with Lea and say thanks, complete with light refreshments. This event will also take place in the basement of the Town Hall, from 2:00-4:00pm.

Later in July, as part of our effort to pull together the town history, we are sponsoring a 'Picture Party' on Saturday, July 16, also in the basement of the Town Hall, from 2:00-4:00pm. We're hoping that townsfolk who own



Francis Howe, 1863—GHS collection.

Francis Howe was in Company E of the 9th Regiment of NH Volunteers. He was wounded in the battle of Fredericksburg and died in a Washington DC hospital in 1863. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

GRANTHAM'S MILITARY HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

April 2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. Allen Walker, president emeritus of the Historical Society, has spent many hours researching Grantham's Civil War history. In addition, researchers working on chapters for the History of Grantham are finding more information which will be added to Allen's article to be published in the summer 2011 issue of this newsletter. Additional articles are planned for the fall issue. To start off this chronology of Grantham's part in American conflicts, in this issue we are presenting Bob Champagne's overview of our military history.

GRANTHAM'S MILITARY HISTORY

Grantham's proud history of citizens' service to their country has been part of the town since the Revolutionary War.



Grantham WWII, GHS Collection

Although Grantham's population from 1790 to 1970 exceeded 1000 inhabitants only briefly in the early 1800s, and averaged about 400 residents over that one hundred and eighty year period, the town was able to provide a proportionate share of young men and women willing to serve in the nation's wars.

As early as the Revolutionary War, twenty-one Grantham men volunteered at some point from the beginning of the war to its conclusion in 1782. Abel Stevens, selectman, was probably the first to join the army in 1776 as a lieutenant and became a captain the following year. At least six Grantham men fought at the battle of Saratoga in 1777. Two Grantham men joined the 1st NH Regiment in 1777.

In the War of 1812, records indicate that nine men from Grantham served in that brief encounter with Great Britain.

During the Militia years from roughly 1820 to 1854, participation flourished. The Militia consisted of units organized within each town. Training was generally confined within the town itself or with neighboring towns. At one point, ninety-nine men were active in Grantham's 31st Rifle Company. Our Militia Flag is pictured above. Units were occasionally nationalized; however that did not occur for the Grantham Militia even though the Mexican War occurred during this time. New Hampshire state law prohibited militia members from serving on foreign soil.

The bitter struggle of the Civil War saw over sixty Grantham men (either born here or living here at enlist-

ment) serving in the Union Army. Ten of these men were killed in

action or died of their wounds or disease. There is no record of how many suffered permanent injuries.

In World War I, often called the Great War, thirteen Granthamites participated. Pearly Smith died in service to his country.

World War II saw forty-six of our residents answering the call. Allen

Walker, Jr. flew B-17 and B-24 bomber missions over France and

Germany. Hap Reney served as a combat infantryman at Normandy, St Lo and in the Battle of the Bulge. Dennis Howard served actively in the U.S. Army Air Corps. John DiNatale served in the Navy on the USS Arkansas. Arthur Hamm also served in the Navy on Guam. Dick Wilson and Dick Mansfield served in Italy with the famed 10th Mountain Division.

Irene Wysocki was in the WASP, the women's air auxiliary. She was trained in and excelled at towing targets in air maneuvers.

In Grantham's tradition of active participation when needed by our country, twenty-six men and women served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953.

Also, during the Vietnam era, 1967 to 1972, twenty-five residents served. Jerry Pillsbury was killed in Vietnam.

No record is currently available for those from Grantham who volunteered to serve during the Gulf Wars or in Afghanistan or Iraq.

—Bob Champagne

Note: The Grantham Historical Society is working on comprehensive lists of all men and women who were or are veterans, either born in Grantham or living here at the time of their enlistment. Since many of our lists are inconsistent, we would appreciate hearing from anyone who either has new names to add or who wants to check our lists to make sure family members are accounted for. You may leave a message at 863-7901 or email granthamhistoricalsociety@gmail.com. Your help with this project would be very much appreciated.



Grantham Militia Flag from GHS Collection



Civil War engraving of Hilton Head, SC Hospital, GHS Collection

GRANTHAM'S TOWN FOREST

DID YOU KNOW THAT GRANTHAM HAS A TOWN FOREST?

At the town meeting on March 13, 1990, the town voted to establish a town forest. Please come to the Historical Society and find out more about this beautiful 433 acre treasure. Our new display tells where the Town Forest is located, how to get there and what you can see and do there. The history of the land dates back to 1767 when King George III of England "by and with" Benning Wentworth, the royal governor, granted to the inhabitants of the "Province of New-Hampshire" a tract of land six miles square which ultimately became Grantham. The land was divided into shares with one share going to the minister and one share going to the benefit of the school. These lots, known as the minister's lot and the school lot, are located within the Town Forest. Come and learn more about the Grantham Town Forest —*Renee Gustafson*



Photo by Renee Gustafson

Lily Pond, Town Forest

Editor's note: Renee, with the assistance of her sister, Marilyn Grinnell, visiting from Florida, and Rae Tober has included two excellent maps of the forest in her display, each surrounded by her exceptional photographs of sites within the forest. GHS plans to sponsor a walk to the Town Forest in late August, led by Renee. Watch for notices with details on our website and in notices around town.

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 (\$10.)

Family (\$25.)

Patron/business/institution (\$50.)

Extra contribution _____

Total check amount _____

VISIT US ON THE WEB...WWW.GRANTHAMHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

A LONG-AGO RESIDENT RETURNS TO GRANTHAM

On Friday, September 24, 2010, the Historical Society workers welcomed Richard Wright of Adrian, West Virginia and his nephew Dick Moyers of Alton, NH for an unexpected visit. Mr. Wright, now 91 years old, lived in Grantham for several years before World War II and returned to look at a town that he remembers well. He later sent a photograph and a summary of his life in Grantham in 1941 and 1942 when he and his wife rented the Hanson's house on the corner of Routes 10 and 114 (see photo). Here is a transcription of Mr. Wright's message for the Historical Society:

I lived in this house in 1941 and '42. The stable garage and Community Building was still there. I worked for Ohm's Mast cutting logs. He lived in a house next to Reney's Store and stabled his log horses there before the stable was torn down.

The car is a 1937 Buick Century. My wife is looking out the window in what I believe was the dining room at that time.

I later worked in a woolen mill in Lebanon for awhile until Uncle Sam called me. Then I returned to West Virginia and enlisted in the Marines, then to Iwo Jima and then to the occupation of Japan. Was exposed to radiation in Nagasaki resulting in cancer, losing my right ear, etc. which you seen. I am legally blind. Excuse the writing.

—Richard Wright, RR 2, Box 122, Adrian, WV 26210-9600

During his visit to GHS, Mr. Wright noted that he had been drawn to this area because of the lumber debris



Photo by Rae Tober

Richard Wright and nephew, Dick Moyers

from the 1938 hurricane. He, his brother and a friend all found work clearing downed trees.

During World War II, Mr. Wright ended up in Nagasaki after the atomic bomb explosion. Many years later, he developed cancer of the face as a result of his exposure to radiation.

Mr. Wright makes an annual visit to New Hampshire. We hope that on his next visit, he will return to GHS so that we may record some of his memories of his short stay here.

*—Rae Tober,
Kathi Osgood and
Pat Andrews*



Photo by Richard Wright

PRESIDENT'S LETTER *Continued from page 1*

old photos of Grantham will stop by and share their treasures with us. We'll have scanners set up to copy these photos while you wait so that you won't have to leave them, and we'd love to chat with you about them so we get the most background possible on what they show and the story behind it. Words cannot say how valuable these images are to a fuller understanding of our town and its history; we hope that you'll agree and share your historic pictures with us.

Finally, as we continue to work on the town history the role of volunteers becomes ever-so important. It could be to conduct research, to help assemble the number of lists we may choose to include in the appendix, or to run to Dartmouth or Concord to double-check an interesting bit of information that we want to include. Whatever your strengths or interests, we can probably find a place here for you in this project. Contact any one of the Executive Committee members if you're interested.

—Ken Story, President GHS

GHS ANNUAL MEETING MAY 19, 2011, 6 PM OLD TOWN HALL (METHODIST CHURCH)



Dr. Allen Koop to speak

The Historical Society, noting the very successful programs available from the New Hampshire Humanities Council, will present Dr. Allen Koop as our speaker for this year's annual meeting. In keeping with the work we are doing on the history of wars during Grantham's existence for the History of Grantham, Dr. Koop's talk is entitled Stark Decency: NH's World War II POW Camp.

"During World War II, 300 German prisoners of war were held at Camp Stark, near the village of Stark in the North Country. The history of this camp tells us much about our country's war experience and about our state."

Dr. Koop is a Visiting Professor of History at Dartmouth College.

Our Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 19, will follow our usual schedule of a potluck supper in the Town Hall, followed by a brief business meeting and Dr. Koop's presentation around 7:00 PM.

The potluck supper will begin at 6:00 PM. Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share. Drinks will be provided.

Our Bylaws require that we vote on a dues schedule every year. Thus, at the business meeting, we would like to propose a new dues schedule for 2011-12 to the membership:

- Individual.....\$15.00
- Family.....\$25.00
- Corporate or business.....\$50.00

Election of officers will also take place. Two positions are open: Treasurer and one Director. Kathi Osgood



Photo by Renee Gustafson

Potluck Supper 2010 Annual Meeting



Photo by Renee Gustafson

Potluck Supper 2000 Annual Meeting

has agreed to be nominated for a second two-year term as treasurer. Rae Tober will be nominated for the open Director's position. A summary of our efforts during the 2010-2011 year will be reviewed by Ken Story, President, and hard copies will be available.

You are welcome to come for the entire evening or for any part of it. This is the one time a year when our membership meets together and we would love to see you.

FROM THE GRANTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COLLECTION OF CIVIL WAR LETTERS

Washington D.C. , May 9th 1865

Dear Brother and Sister,

"There has been a great deal of excitement in this city since the assassination of the President and Mr. Seward and it takes a pretty strong guard in some places to keep things straight. That murder was an awful affair but the rascal will never commit another one and I think it doubtful whether some of his friends and accomplices will do much more damage, for quite a number supposed to be connected with him, and some known to be so connected, are now confined in this city. Some at the Navy Yard and some at the Carroll Prison and I believe a few at the Old Capitol. I saw a brother of the murderer a week ago last Sunday at the Carroll Prison. Also the surgeon that set Brother's leg, one bone of which he broke, it is supposed, when he jumped from the box in the theatre to the stage over twelve feet." —P.T. Colby

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011

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Allen Walker

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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

Website: www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org

2011 CALENDAR

Check our website and posters around town for more details.

May 19, 2011

GHS ANNUAL MEETING &
POTLUCK SUPPER
6PM OLD TOWN HALL
(Methodist Church)
Speaker: Allen Koop, NHHC

Sat., July 2, 2011

Old Home Day
Visit the GHS table!

Sat., July 16, 2011

Bring your old photos to be scanned and returned to you
Town Hall • 1to 4 PM
Refreshments served
Watch for notices.

LATE AUGUST – DATE TBA
Walking tour to the Town Forest
Led by Renee Gustafson

OCTOBER 20, 2011 – THURSDAY
Fall program • NH Humanities
Council • Speaker TBA

DECEMBER 17, 2011 (tentative)
2ND ANNUAL APPRAISAL DAY
Town Hall • 10 AM to 2 PM

