

Grantham Historical Society

www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org



Summer 2012

NEWSLETTER

ALLEN WALKER: A GREAT MAN IN HISTORY

When I was a kid growing up in Grantham, Allen (or Al-lie, as he was known) was a bit of a mythical figure. Born and raised in Grantham, he had long since relocated to New Jersey, where he worked doing something mysterious, perhaps building nuclear weapons, or tracking down bad guys. He only returned to Grantham occasionally. I remember him coming back in the summers, to visit his mother and father – Gladys and Sam – and to regale us kids with his sharp and dry wit.

My first memory of Allen was the summer day he gave me a ride in his Studebaker Hawk. It must have been around 1967, when I was 10 years old. It was the sportiest and most unusual car I'd ever seen, and this from a kid who loved cars. We drove down Route 114 onto Route 10, heading south, with his nephew Marty riding shotgun and me in the back, somewhat amazed. Who was this guy? Where did he come from? Did he really grow up in sleepy Grantham? He and Marty traded jokes back and forth, only a fraction of which I understood. I laughed as if I got the punch lines and the satire, as if that would make me as smart and funny as him.

Allen's years away and my own adolescence interrupted much further contact with him. Moving to Massachusetts for college and graduate school didn't help either. Yet I'd occasionally run into him, as in the summer of 1980 at the Grantham fire department's annual auction. There he was, standing with his Dad, a big smile on his face and always a quip about something. He made my mother laugh that afternoon, as he so often did.

Unfortunately, it wasn't until many years later that I got to know Allen in any way worth mentioning. In the summers I would come up from Little Rock, to which my career had taken me, to visit my Mom. If I timed it right, I'd come in mid-August, right around the time Allen would

have his annual lawn party, and I'd wangle an invitation through my mother. We'd walk up Route 114, weaving our way through the lines of cars parked along the road, all of which were driven by fellow attendees. An invitation to one of Allen's birthday parties was something

to treasure and not to be taken lightly.

The rumor was that if you got invited to Allen's party and you didn't RSVP, you did not get invited again. Not sure if that was true or not, because we never tested it. We usually came, and on the rare occasions when we could not, we called with our regrets.

It was during these parties that I finally got to talk with Allen as a fellow adult. Even if only for a few minutes and between conversations with the many who considered him a friend, Allen and I would talk about politics, about Grantham history, about some of the town characters we both remembered. It was then I truly knew how intelligent and

thoughtful he was and how much he had retained about our little town, in spite of all those years living away. Yes, we tended to vote the same and to see much of the world the same way, but it was then that I began to understand his love of history. And to realize that if I was ever going to know as much about Grantham as Allen, I had my work cut out for me.

When I moved back to Grantham twelve years ago, I was caring for an aging parent who had survived one bout of cancer, and I had my hands full. I was interested in the Grantham Historical Society and certainly supported its work, but I felt like I had enough to do at home that I didn't need to take on more. Unfortunately, my mother's cancer returned, and by the summer of 2004 she was gone. Certainly a grieving period was appropriate and everyone understood that. Still, walking across my yard

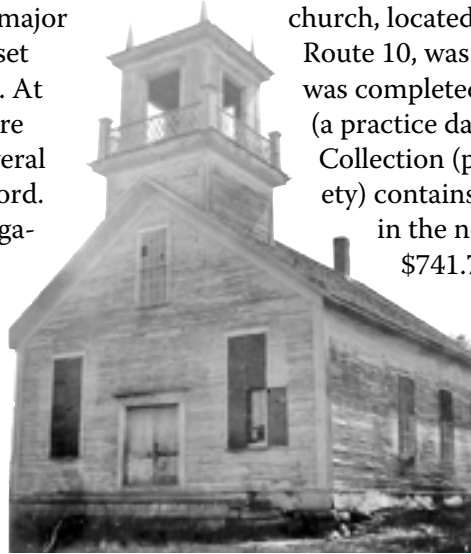


Allen's portrait. GHS archives

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THE NORTH GRANTHAM METHODIST CHURCH- PART I

In Grantham's almost 250 years, the major religious denomination from the outset was the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the start, the pastors or preachers were circuit-riding itinerants, covering several towns by horseback to preach the Word. The gathering of a Methodist congregation began in 1801 with the assignment of two preachers, Philip Ayer and Leonard Bennet. These rugged men of the cloth were part of the Hanover circuit of the Methodist Conference, the organization of regional preachers and church administrators who met regularly for worship and support. The traveling preachers often served



two or more towns with religious services held in homes, barns or other places of sufficient size. The Conference met quarterly on a rotating basis in the towns that were served. The Grantham Archives holds a book of minutes from Conference meetings between 1820 and 1841. In addition to Grantham, meetings were held in Canaan, Enfield, Lebanon, Dorchester and Plainfield. Meetings in 1828 and 1830 were recorded at "Dunbar Hill, Grantham" and "Grantham mountain." In 1833, one meeting was held at Leavitt Hill, presumably at a home. (In 1822, the minutes noted "Had some desultory conversation" and at a later meeting in Lebanon, "Nothing of importance attended to.")

The population of Grantham increased from around 700 people in 1800 to more than 1000 by 1820. The Four Corners on the mountain became a crossroads for both citizens and travelers; Dunbar Hill was a second locus of settlement. The need for a building in which to hold religious services was clear in both areas of Grantham. Two buildings were erected in 1826: the Methodist Church at Four Corners and the Union Church on Dunbar Hill. A history of Grantham churches written by George Tyrrel, pastor from 1872 to 1873 and 1895 to 1897, states that "these houses were of respectable style and finish for the times and place." After the church buildings were completed (Dunbar Hill first), preaching occurred alternately between the two. The buildings were used for about twenty years; then changes in the population and the distribution of families in town necessitated different locations for religious services. With the decline of the village at Four Corners, "in 1855 the present house of worship was built in North Grantham, and the one on the mountain abandoned and afterwards sold." The new

church, located at the junction of Burpee Hill Road and Route 10, was built for "about \$1200." After the building was completed, funds were raised by the sale of pews (a practice dating from the 18th C). The Horton Farm Collection (part of the Archives of the Historical Society) contains an undated sheet listing "Owners of Pews in the new meetinghouse." Thirty-one men raised \$741.75. Names listed were from North and East Grantham families.

MINISTERS

Names of ministers at North Grantham are difficult to document. Most that are identified also served the Union Church in the village as well as in churches in surrounding towns.

I.W. or O.W. Watkins	1857-59	Village
	1872-73	North Grantham
	1895-96	North Grantham
Hugh Montgomery	1866-68	North Grantham
Silas Quimby	1868-70	North Grantham
W.H. Eastman	1870-72	North Grantham
	1873-75	North Grantham
George H. Tyrrel	1872-73	Village & North Grantham
	1895-97	North Grantham
Noble Fiske	1873-76	Village
	1909-10	Village
	1873-75	North Grantham
W.W. Le Seur	1876-78	North Grantham
George S. Wentworth	1877-79	N. Grantham & W. Enfield
F.M. Pickles	1878-80	North Grantham
Thomas Winsor	1879-80	North Grantham
	1880-81	Village, N. Grantham & Croydon
J. Wesley Bean	1881-83	Village & North Grantham
George Henry Hardy	1883-86	Village & North Grantham

THE CHURCH IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Only bits of information are found in the Archives about the day-to-day functioning of the North Grantham Church. Finances were probably tight, relying on a farming community for the full support of the church.

WELCOME TO THE NEW TOWN ARCHIVIST

Rae Tober was sworn in as the new Town Archivist in May, 2012, following in the shoes of Lea Frey who held the position for fifteen years and retired in June 2011. The old saw – when you need something done, ask the busiest person you know – applies to Rae. Now a resident of Eastman, she has lived in several historic New Hampshire towns, has dealt in antiques and appreciates the importance of gathering and maintaining historic records. Rae has been a reliable staff member on Friday afternoons when the Historical Society and Town Archives are open. She has a special interest in old maps. She joined the Board of the Historical Society several years ago and remains a very active member, participating in the work of the Collections Committee, assisting in the preparation of exhibits and uses her photographic skills to document people, places and events in Grantham. When not busy with Historical Society activities, she also serves on the Board of the Council on Aging for the Kearsarge area.

Rae is available to assist visitors with research on Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at the Historical Society and Town Archives building at 34 Dunbar Hill Road or by appointment. She may be contacted by emailing rae.tober@gmail.com.

The Town Archives now has copies of the 1940 Grantham census that was released in April 2012.

Watch for our 2013 calendars with historic Grantham photos that will go on sale after October 25, 2012. See our website for details.

HELP NEEDED!

2nd GHS APPRAISAL DAY

**September 16, 2012
noon to 3 PM**

Our lunch counter at last year's Appraisal Day was very popular and a great fund-raiser for the Historical Society. We would like to repeat it for this year's event so the donation of soups, desserts and kitchen help would be greatly appreciated.

We could also use helpers to keep the flow of appraisals moving along. If you can offer your services or food donations again, thank you. If you are a newcomer who wants to contribute, even better! Please email Kathi Osgood at k.good246@gmail.com to let her know how you would like to help out. As always, our thanks for your participation.



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

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 _____

ALLEN WALKER *Continued from page 1*

in the summer of 2005 and watching the historical society trolley tour roll past my house made me a little sad, or rather, a little disappointed in myself, as I'd had absolutely nothing to do with it. I began to feel that old yearning to get back into the field in which I'd worked so hard to get my degree. So when Allen graciously called and asked if I'd be interested in becoming vice-president of the society, I knew it was time.

Allen founded the historical society along with his lifelong friend Ella Reney back in 1993, right after he retired here, and was its leader and inspiration for the rest of his life. Sam, Allen's father, was a Grantham native and born storyteller, so Allen came by his love of the town's history 'honest,' as they say. However,

it was Allen's ability to share that love and make all of us who worked with him love this town also that was truly amazing. Pretty soon we all wanted to know more about the town and how it grew, about the people who built it, about the places that no longer were. Allen guided us and inspired us until we were able to grow without him. Now, with his passing, we have no choice.

Allen gave much to Grantham and to the people here who he loved. Hopefully, we gave him something back. Hopefully we let him know that we appreciated his concern for all of us, great and small, and that we valued his warmth and kindness. Hopefully we returned his generosity, and hopefully he thought so. Hopefully we made him feel as welcome as he

made us feel, in this little town we call home.

During one of Allen's lawn parties, early on, when I did not know him well, I took my turn in the buffet line. As I advanced from the food to the cold beverages, I was thrilled to discover the variety of cold beer Allen offered, and the extremely high quality of the brands offered. I pulled my selection from the ice, popped the cap, and as I returned to my table on that hot summer day, I remember thinking "This is a historian we can TRUST."

Thank you, Allen. You deserve better than 'good-bye.' You deserve our love, and our dedication to strive and achieve in your memory. Those things never perish.

—Ken Story

NORTH GRANTHAM CHURCH *Continued from page 2*

In 1870, the pastor commented on the lack of interest among church members: "many seem quite below the standard of piety, or real Methodism. The people are not in easy circumstances as to prosperity generally and therefore have to raise the preacher's salary, which is low, at a sacrifice, but this they, generally, appear cheerfully to make rather than dispense with the means of grace, and the preached word."

Upkeep of the church building also drained financial resources. In 1883, two new stoves were purchased (cost ~\$20.00) because the old ones were unsafe. Two new chairs were also added "for the front." The blinds and windows were repaired in 1884, paid for by the Ladies Society. In February, 1885, a newspaper column about Grantham events reported "Some needed repairs have been made on the North Grantham Church by volunteers. More needs to be done when warm weather comes." And in 1899, "Work on the church is progressing slowly. It is anticipated it will be ready to occupy the last Sunday of December."

In small towns during the 19th century, the church often served as the center of social activities. North Grantham was no exception. Concerts for "the old folks" (1885), meetings for a "Holiness Convention" in 1886, and

Ladies Societies' projects fostered unity between the two churches in town. Each church supported its own Sabbath School. Thirty-three books "were purchased for the N(orth) G(rantham) Sunday School library from the Meriden Cong. S.S. for only \$3.50 in Dec. 1884." In 1885, Rev. and Mrs. Tyrrel were presented with a quilt made by the Ladies' Society. It contained 81 ten inches square blocks which contained 1947 pieces in 73 different patterns. Each block was signed in indelible ink and each contributor paid 18 cents into the church fund "for the benefit of the church."

Late 19th century maps of Grantham note a "Methodist parsonage" located on the south side of Burpee Hill Road. A number of documents in the Historical Society Archives refer to parsonages but do not differentiate between the one in North Grantham and several others in the village. An early one was located on Dunbar Hill. The current home at the corner of Route 114 and Route 10 was a Methodist parsonage well into the 20th century. Research in underway to better understand where the parsonages were located and how long they were used.

—Pat Andrews

Part II of this article will be included in the Fall newsletter.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For a second time, GHS's spring program was chosen "Editor's Pick" by the Valley News: Peter James's presentation on the history of the Abbot-Downing Company and the Concord Coach drew an audience of forty people.



Potluck supper – courtesy of Renee Gustafson

This was preceded by our annual potluck supper and business meeting where new officers were elected (see p.6) and 2013 dues were voted to remain the same. Displays of recent and current GHS projects were set up and selected items from the Horton Farm Collections were shown. Kitty Brown, daughter of Pete and Phyl Forest, was present to share memories of the Horton Farm with visitors.



Peter James, speaker at Annual Meeting – courtesy of Renee Gustafson

New donations to the GHS Collections include a series of WWI postcards, a photo of the Bouldervale farmhouse c. 1900, 3 car registrations from late 1920s, an Eastman lantern and many pieces of ephemera. Connie Howard stops by almost every Friday afternoon with her gleanings from sorting through many years of Boulevard Farm accumulations.

An unexpected and important gift to GHS arrived during the spring – an oil painting of the Drak homestead in Grantham (see photo). Handwriting on the back says: "Old Drak homestead and Croydon Mt., Grantham". John Oyler of Halifax, Nova Scotia, the donor of the painting, purchased it in an antique shop in Petite Riviere, Nova Scotia. Lea Frey facilitated the donation to GHS and researched the Drake family who lived in Grantham between 1812 and 1879 with one member marrying into the Dunbar family. Congratulations go to Craig McArt who was chosen Recreation Volunteer of the Year (2011) by Eastman. (See Eastman Living Spring 2012), to Lillian Cote on her 90th birthday and to Ivan Hoyt on his 101st birthday.



Horton Farm display – courtesy of Renee Gustafson



Drak homestead – GHS Archives

With the revision of the Guide to the Archives of the Town of Grantham and the Grantham Historical Society, we now have more detailed information about our resources for genealogical research. New lists have been added to our website (www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org)

Lastly, thanks to the town for our new copier and to the Grantham Garden Club for once again making our entrance inviting with summer flowers.



Photo courtesy of Rae Tober

AVE ATQUE VALE, ALLEN (Hail and farewell – Catullus)

Allen Walker's farewell to Grantham was signaled by the playing of Taps for his family and friends gathered at Memorial Cemetery on June 18, 2012. He had requested a military burial. The American flag was presented to his nieces. The Historical Society, thanks to Dick Hocker and Renee Gustafson, has had a flowering plum tree planted in our Memorial Garden in remembrance of him, purchased with donations made to GHS in his memory. We plan a dedication for the Garden and the individuals remembered there at some time in the future.

PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED!

Do you have any old photographs of Grantham and/or Grantham people – either single pictures or a collection?

GHS welcomes both donations and loans for scanning of historic photographs of our town. If possible, information on the location, date or approximate date and identification of any persons in the photos is helpful. These can be brought to GHS on Friday afternoons between 1:00 and 4:00 PM or give us a call and we will pick them up.

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*The Grantham Historical Society and Town Archives are open on
Friday afternoons from 1 to 4 PM or by appointment.
The building is located at 34 Dunbar Hill Road.*

Email: granthamhistory@gmail.com
Website: www.granthamhistoricalsociety.org

2012 CALENDAR

Sunday, Sept. 16, 2012

2ND ANNUAL APPRAISAL DAY
Appraiser: Dan Olmstead,
Newfields, NH—Appraiser &
auctioneer since 1978
Town Hall (lower level)
Noon to 3 PM
Lunch available for purchase

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012

STEVE TAYLOR:
New Hampshire's
One-Room Schools:
The Romance and
the Reality



7 PM—Town Hall
A New Hampshire Humanities
Council program

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