

NEWSLETTER



Holderness Historical Society

Spring 2017

Volume XXXIV

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HAPPY
SUMMER

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Helen Nicolay

Helen Nicolay, the daughter of Abraham Lincoln's private secretary, kept her beloved Shepard Hill home "Tannenruh" here in Holderness for approximately 60 years and made friendships with many people who remember her today as "Aunt Helen."

The vast collection of art and writing she left behind at the time of her death in 1954 illustrate a life immersed in late 19th and early 20th centuries Washington, DC politics along with a profound appreciation for the beauty of this world. Her earliest influence was that of US President Abraham Lincoln, whose memory was a constant presence throughout her life.

Her father, John George Nicolay, was Abraham Lincoln's private secretary from the very beginning stages of Lincoln's campaign for president through the tumultuous years of the Civil War. Her mother,

Therena Bates Nicolay, was the daughter of a mid-western judge whose family members held influential positions in state and national governments.

Helen and her father came to Holderness in the early 1890's and built a cottage on Shepard Hill in 1895, ten years following the death of Therena. It was Helen's growing interest and ability in creating art that brought Helen and her father to Holderness in 1890, where they stayed at The Asquam House.

Helen first learned to sketch as a child. She took after her father who sketched mementos of his native Germany, and had painted wildflowers while vacationing at Crystal Park in Colorado with fellow Lincoln secretary John Milton Hay. Recognizing her ability and appreciation for art as a young woman, Helen's mother and father enrolled her in formal art education.

Helen attended the Corcoran School for the Arts in Washington, DC. She also studied painting under J. Wells Champney at his studio in New York during the winter and at his summer classes at Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Helen was inspired by American Impressionist painter Childe Hassam, whom she met while on the Isles of Shoals.

Celia Thaxter, a nationally recognized poet of the late 19th century, hosted an artist salon on Appledore Island where her husband opened a famous hotel called the Appledore House. It was at Celia Thaxter's salon where Helen met Childe Hassam, as well as many other painters and writers, including the poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

Helen associated with a community of artists and writers whose work at the dawn of the Progressive Era demonstrated a collective rejection of the social Darwinism that arose following the Civil War. Of another generation from her father's, Helen nevertheless embraced the legacy and ethic of an Abraham Lincoln who had been an ever-present force in her life.

Helen and John Nicolay first heard about Holderness through her friend and fellow artist, Frances Goodrich, at Champney's art studio in 1880. The Goodrich family was among the first summer residents in Holderness to build on Shepard Hill. The Asquam House was built in 1880 on the hill summit, 325 feet above the shoreline with views of Asquam, Little Squam and Minnisquam (also known as White Oak Pond), as well as stunning views of the lakes, islands and surrounding mountains.

continued on page 3

The President's Corner

Partnered with the Holderness Library we will be presenting three programs this year, which you can find listed on a separate page of the Newsletter. We look forward to seeing you in attendance at these programs.

There will be two special exhibits this summer: **School Days** featuring pictures of Holderness schools of yesterday and class pictures as well as artifacts from the era of one room school houses will be our early summer exhibit. In August there will be an exhibit of the paintings of Helen Nicolay, compliments of Patty Sue Salvador.

An ongoing project is a collection of pictures and stories of Holderness historic buildings. Does your home or building have a story? Please share it with us. If you have any information that you are willing to contribute to this collection, it would be most welcome and will serve to preserve our town's history and give it perspective. The work of cataloging our books and pamphlets to make research simpler continues. Our library area allows people to research families, cemeteries, camps, historical events and places. You can view several DVD's including Holderness 250th in the museum on Saturdays this summer.

Thank you for your continued support by way of membership dues and contributions. If you have not renewed your membership for 2017, please use the enclosed envelope to do so. Please join us this year. Your ideas, suggestions, and help will be enthusiastically welcomed. We are a small group of active members and we could use some help. Please contact me or any other board member if you can help or for more information.

Linda Foerderer

FPLinda@aol.com (603) 968-7487 mid April to November 1 or (561) 279-9720 November to mid April.

Exclusive Visit to Tannenruh

Be one of only 50 lucky people to visit the former home of John and Helen Nicolay on Shepard Hill in Holderness on July 15th from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Thanks to the generosity of Kathryn and Mitchell Drew present owners of Tannenruh, the Holderness Historical Society and the Holderness Free Library will hold a fundraiser that will include a tour of the grounds and Helen's workshop, an exhibition of artwork by Helen Nicolay*, display of the Drews' Nicolay and Lincoln memorabilia and a presentation by John Maguire. Wine and cheese will be served. Tickets are \$25 per person for advanced tickets and the first five people to purchase tickets will receive a copy of "Lincoln's Boys" a book that chronicles John Nicolay and John Hay's experiences in the Lincoln White House. After July 1st tickets will be \$35 per person. Please make checks payable to HHS and mail to PO Box 319, Holderness, NH 03245.

In the event of rain the presentation by John Maguire will be held at the historical society where the wine and cheese will be served as well.

*Helen's painting Grove at Tannenruh Estate on Shepard Hill previously displayed at the Smithsonian will be shown exclusively at the fundraiser.



Pictured on the left is Mrs. R. Tolford Piper, mother of Holderness Historical Society Director Mary Elizabeth Nielsen with Miss Helen Nicolay on the right. Photo probably taken in the early 1950's.

Keep up the Good Work!

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40 Years Ago
December 19, 1946

Mrs. R. Tolford Piper of Holderness, who is visiting Miss Helen Nicolay in Washington, D.C., was the guest of Mrs. Harry S. Truman for tea at the White House Thursday, December 12.

Asquam House proprietor Leon H. Cilley worked to have the hotel expanded in the years following its initial construction to accommodate growing crowds of people escaping the heat of the cities to the south. Even with its expansion, it was reported that hundreds of people had to be turned away.

One sweltering August day in 1890, Helen and her father left Washington, DC by train bound for New Hampshire. When they could not get a reservation at the Isle of Shoals, they ventured north to Holderness, where they discovered the Asquam House.

The beauty of Shepard Hill and surrounding environs provided refuge from the summer heat of Washington, but was also therapeutic for John Nicolay who suffered from life-long, undiagnosed ailments. He could continue in his work on the Lincoln biography with assistance from Helen as his secretary during the hottest days of the year and among the pine forests that likely reminded him of his childhood Germany.

She first learned the life of a writer as she sat quietly in her father's office listening to conversations between her father and John Hay.

John Nicolay helped found the Literary Society of Washington, DC and so it was natural for Helen, as she grew into adulthood, to join the society. She spoke at a number of dinners and ceremonies and was an active participant in the society.

Soon after this visit to Holderness, John decided to purchase land on Shepard Hill. Cottages surrounding the Asquam House were built for a small number of wealthy and influential people. Among these summer visitors were Dr. Thomas Osborne, a research scientist who had discovered a number of vitamins in food; Marion Talbot, Dean of Women at the University of Chicago; a daughter of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; and, eventually, Helen and John Nicolay.

They hired builders to construct their summer cottage, a boathouse camp on Big Squam Lake and also a garage with driver's quarters for their chauffeur. Helen and John called their summer retreat "Tannenruh," which takes its meaning from German to mean, "Peace in the pines."

While they socialized with the country's most influential and wealthy people, Helen and John Nicolay made life-long friendships with local residents and the people they hired to help them. When John Nicolay was first planning their cottage on Shepard Hill, Holderness resident Frank Piper built a stone wall leading into the property. Later on, Mr. Piper's son, Tolford, was also hired to be Helen's chauffeur while she was in New Hampshire. When Tolford Piper died, Helen took on his widow, Pattie, as her companion and helper.

Pattie Piper had operated a small restaurant out of the house Tolford built called "The Piped Piper Tea Room." Helen Nicolay frequently took meals there and became "aunt" to the children of Pattie Piper's daughter Mary Elizabeth.

John Nicolay was nearly done with his condensed version of the Lincoln biography when he died in 1901 just after President McKinley's assassination. Helen finished the book and published it in 1902 without taking any credit for her part in its completion. She was 36 years old. Critics said the writing was seamless and one could not tell where John Nicolay left off and where she began.

History and its preservation was a fundamental part of Helen Nicolay's life, so she was surprised to one day hear the plaintive voice of the son of her close friend, Elisabeth Tibbott, who complained to his "Aunt Helen" that history as it was taught in school was boring. This statement impelled Helen to write the first of many "Boys Life" books for children, titled *The Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln*.

Helen lived a long, full life after the death of her father. She traveled extensively, and as she did so, painted landscapes and images of life in Europe, Egypt and the American west. She was fluent in several languages. Her obituary, published in at least three of the nation's most prominent newspapers at the time of her death in 1954, states she served as a translator during either one or both of the World Wars. She volunteered for the Red Cross and taught Sunday school at All Souls Church in Washington, DC.

There she made close friends with the minister Ulysses Grant Baker Pierce and his daughter, Fay. Fay later married Hilding Beij and maintained her friendship with Helen for the rest of their lives. Helen taught their daughter, Barbara, in Sunday school. At the time of her death, Helen left many of her earthly possessions to Barbara and her Brother, Pierce, as Fay predeceased her.

Helen Nicolay bequeathed money and gifts to several close friends, who were like family members to her, as well as to organizations such as the Society for the Hard of Hearing and the Red Cross.

Her greatest gift, however, was a legacy of writing and art that illustrates a deep respect for history, nature and humanity. She went on to write more than 20 books having to do with United States history, from the construction of the capitol, to the building of the Panama Canal. Helen wrote her final book about her father, *Lincoln's Secretary*. It was published in 1949. A book about artist and author Helen Nicolay is expected to be published this year. For more information, visit: helennicolay.org.



John Maguire

Helen as a young woman

Treasurer's Report

As a 501c3 non-profit, we have filed our 990N with the IRS, our A9 and A12 with the Town and the NH CT2a with the NH Atty. General's office. Now we are ready for 2017.

Our biggest expense this winter has been oil at \$2.15 per gallon.

We are seeking additional estimates to re-shingle our roof. It will cost about \$8500 so we would appreciate it greatly if members and donors would consider an extra amount earmarked for the roof project. We hope to have the job done this summer.

Many thanks to all of you who have supported us with dues and donations.

In Memoriam

Life Member **Dick Davenport**, retired teacher and private pilot, resident of Shepard Hill and repository of countless years of Squam history, died February 11.

Robert F. Howe, lifelong Holderness resident and brother of Life Member C. Allen Howe, died January 17.

Betty Merrill Havlock, sister of member John Merrill, whose Merrill ancestors have lived on Mt. Prospect Rd. for 150 years, died December 30.

Longtime summer resident and member **Ruth West** died in Wenham, MA October 2.

Having a Gathering?

The Holderness Historical Society Meeting Room is available for gatherings of up to 50 people. There is a fully supplied kitchen and two restrooms. The rental fee varies between \$80 and \$155 depending on the number of guests. Local civic groups may use it without charge. For more information or to reserve, please contact Linda Foerderer 968-7487 or Missy Mason 968-3334.

Special Exhibit

There will be two special exhibits in the museum this summer. In June and July ***School Days***, featuring pictures and artifacts of the Holderness schools of yesterday and in August ***Artwork of Helen Nicolay***. In August the museum will be open more days and hours. Please check our website to see the expanded schedule.

Recent Gifts to the Historical Society

From Joanne Wernig, Director of Archives, Holderness School: a copy of Holderness School: 125 Years in Pictures by Judith Solberg.

From Dick Flanders: miscellaneous newspaper clippings including one from October 13, 1993 which describes the plan to move our building from Perch Pond Road to Curry Place.

From Woodie Laverack: pictures and an obituary for George Sabine, Jr. whose winter visit to the Pipers was told in his own letter in the fall 2016 newsletter.

From Bebe Wood: a printed copy of a 1966 poem by June Lent "Lord Help Me Slow Down" whose verses make us think about our summer to come and include the following:

Lord, help me slow down to see graceful trees
That border on Squam's rugged shore:
Maple and birch, hemlock and pine
From primitive days of yore.

*

The hum of a motorboat towing a skier
Children's gay chatter and talk,
The bark of a dog, the cry of a loon--
All can be heard from the dock.



Summer Celebration

Fireworks and music by the Baker Valley Band on Little Squam are scheduled for **September 1st**. Raindate is September 2nd. Fireworks barge provided by Squam Docks and band ferried by the Science Center.

Please support this celebration by sending a donation to the Holderness Historical Society. Please write *Celebration* on memo line of check to direct deposit into the Celebration account.

Museum of the White Mountains

A new exhibit, "Summer Camps: The White Mountains Roots of an Iconic American Experience", will run from May 1 to September 13. The historical society is lending a print of Camp Wachusett as well as a brochure from Camp Algonquin to the exhibit. For those who have not yet visited the museum, it is located on Highland Avenue in Plymouth in the former Methodist Church. It is open Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.



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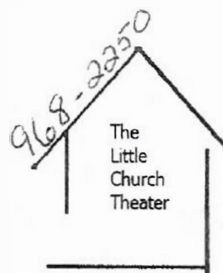
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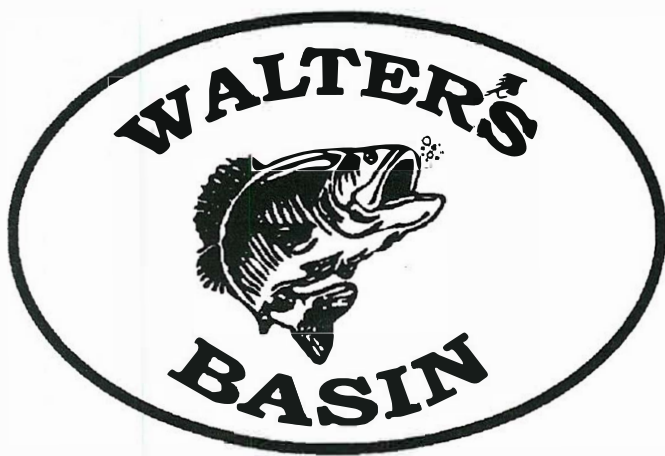


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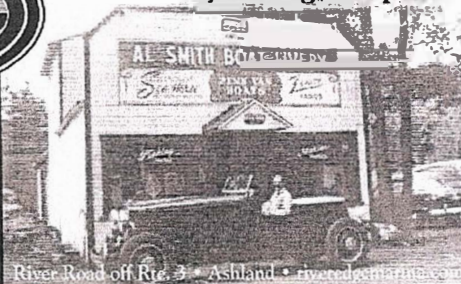
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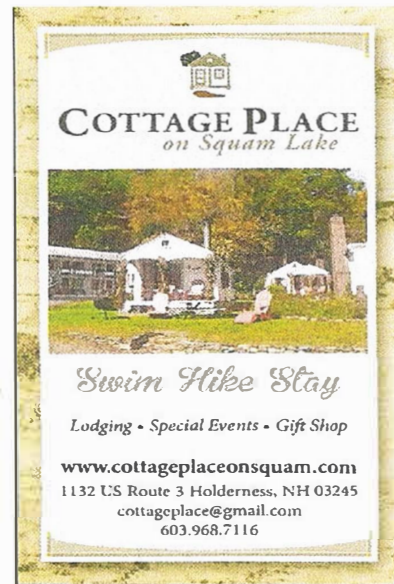
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Holderness and Chancellorsville

The Fall 2016 issue of Army History magazine contains an article by historian Nathan Marzoli about the role of the 12th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment in the Civil War battle at Chancellorsville, VA on May 3, 1863. Northern forces lost there and the 12th suffered heavy casualties. Mr. Marzoli consulted local historical societies as part of his research. We provided him with the names of Holderness soldiers. Three men died: Washington I. Baker, age 18, Oloff L. Jewett, 26, and their Captain, Orlando W. Keyes, 30. More were wounded: Samuel H. Baker, 24; Richard M. Delono, 27; John Q. Gault, 34; Henry F. Keyes, 20; Nathaniel Shackford; Miles M. Sweeney, 34; and Joseph B. Tupper, 18. Newell Davidson, 19, was captured but later escaped. Two months later the survivors fought at Gettysburg.

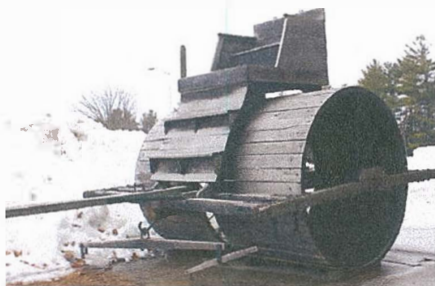
The above names were taken from Who's Who in the Civil War compiled by Vinnie Toland, Jr. of Manchester and given to the historical society in June 2011. He has made it his project to provide every New Hampshire municipality with information about its Civil War soldiers. The article can be found online at <http://www.history.army.mil/armyhistory/issues/2010-present.html#2016>.



Tink's Notes



***This year's annual ice harvest by the Rockywold-Deephaven Camps got off to a late start. Camps manager John Jurczynski said that layers of "snow ice" kept his crew off Squam Lake at 'Deep End' until February when there was enough build-up of black ice, the best kind. Over a three day period upwards of 200 tons of ice in 100 pound cakes was cut, hauled ashore and loaded into two ice houses for use this coming summer. So the tradition of serving 65 individual ice boxes, one in each camp, continues as one of the last such harvests in New Hampshire.



***How our forebearers handled winters!
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***Thanks to Holderness resident Samuel Livermore who, as a delegate, made New Hampshire the ninth and deciding state at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1789.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

A friendly reminder to all members who have not paid this year's dues **NOW** is the time! Please take a moment to renew using the enclosed envelope. Your support is much appreciated; it enables your society to preserve the history of Holderness as well as present programs.

Hope to see you at the museum.

Cynthia Murray

Membership Chairman

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and Change, Be aware of your
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Gift, Be a Blessing, Really See,
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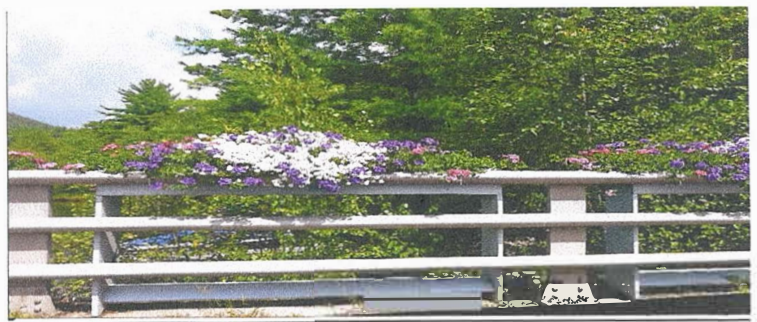
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FLOWERS ON THE BRIDGE

Hurray for Spring !!

The bridge flowers will be planted soon and we hope they will be enjoyed by all. With the lake cruises boarding next to the boat ramp on 113 there will not be as many admirers as in the past years. We will miss their compliments!!

As usual donations are always needed not only to purchase the plants and soil but for the watering system as well. A huge thanks to all of you who have donated these past years. Your checks both large and small are so much appreciated.

A donation can be made to Holderness Historical Society, PO Box 319, Holderness, NH 03245. In the memo line of your check, please indicate ***FLOWERS ON THE BRIDGE***. Thank you!!

Liz Greason and Cynthia Murray

MUSEUM SUMMER HOURS

The museum will be open on Saturdays from June 24th thru September 9th from 10 AM to 12 noon. There will be additional hours added in August to allow more visitors to come and see Helen Nicolay's artwork which will be exhibited in August. Please come visit and explore the museum.

Chocorua (Church) Island Chapel Now on National Register of Historic Places

A committee chaired by Betsy Whitmore worked for eight years under the auspices of the Squam Lake Conservation Society to shepherd several Squam Lake properties through the nomination process with research and writing done by Concord historian Liz Hengen.

The island was the site of a boy's camp, considered the first in the U.S., founded by Ernest Balch in 1881. Religious services were an important part of the camp. When the camp ceased operations, former campers bought the property and continued weekly non-denominational services in the outdoor chapel during July and August. The tradition has continued for more than 110 years. The island chapel was cited as a "significant historical landscape" and for having played "a key social role in Squam Lake's summer community." The chapel was recognized by the Secretary of the Interior in October 2016.

....on Samuel Livermore and Holderness

His influence reached far beyond the borders of New Hampshire Provincial township named by Royal Governor Benning Wentworth for Robert D'Arcy, the Earl of Holderness, England, first in 1751. Ten years later, after proprietors here had met all pre-conditions for township, Samuel Livermore became a proprietor. He relocated here in 1775 but was destined to become a key architect in ratification of a constitution establishing the United States of America we know today.

Livermore, who was widely recognized as very competent before the law, had been an early New Holderness proprietor/grantee since the town's successful second founding in 1761. The first attempt had failed to meet settlement requirements so its charter was repealed. At one point Samuel held half the acreage within the new township's thirty-six square miles starting at Livermore Falls on the Pemigewasset River. Later he purchased a land grant across the river in Plymouth from Nathaniel Garfield and years later an additional 1,500 acres there from John Fenton who was returning to Great Britain for fear of the coming insurrection and war. Livermore was chosen by the Plymouth proprietors to procure, in 1772, a new Plymouth town charter only to have it dismissed by the royal governor.

The following year, at the establishment of Grafton County, a Court of Sessions made up of local justices of the peace was formed with one of its duties to construct a courthouse.

The original Thirteen Colonies had been founded as such under British Common Law. They became sovereign states only after the British surrendered at Yorktown on October 19, 1781. A Continental Congress had convened back on September 5, 1774 to decide on what action to take in response to the increasing oppression by Great Britain. Following the Revolutionary War, the colonies had devolved into a loose confederacy but with the purpose of forming *a more perfect union*, in the words of the Declaration of Independence. But much was missing from the governing Articles of Confederation adopted later on March 1, 1781. So the call went out for a convention to draw up a new federal founding document to be held in May of 1787.

The Journal of the N.H. Convention for the Investment, Discussion, and Decision of the Federal Constitution (its full title) is very brief, only ten pages. No speeches were recorded. There is no record of proceedings other than the result of actions taken. There were two sessions over ten days starting in Exeter on 13 February, 1788 and concluding in Concord. Livermore attended all sessions representing New Holderness as well as Campton and Thornton of the 175 towns and "other places" who sent delegates. Many delegates, perhaps a majority and led by Joshua Atherton of Amherst, opposed adoption due to the provisions over slavery. So Livermore, who saw an overriding need to replace the Articles of Confederation and so support ratification, had his work cut out for him.

Saturday, June 21, 1788, saw Delegate Atherton move adjournment which Livermore and his supporters saw as an effort to kill ratification. Atherton's motion was defeated and Livermore moved "the main question" which brought ratification to the floor. In a last minute effort to kill ratification Atherton extolled, echoing the words of Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry of Virginia, "...we will not lend aid of our ratification to this cruel and inhuman merchandise, not even for a day...the most barbarous violation of the sacred laws of God and humanity!" But he lost. The vote was 57 in favor, 47 against and *a more perfect union* became the "law of the land" with New Hampshire becoming the ninth and deciding state.

Livermore would return to Holderness where he died four days after his seventy-first birthday and was buried directly behind the historic Trinity Chapel he built adjacent to today's Holderness School campus. It remains the second oldest Episcopal church in **The Ninth State**.

Tink Taylor



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Old-Fashioned Entertainment

Try the Song Circle organized by Sandra Jones which takes place at Town Hall the fourth Saturday each month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. If you like to play, bring your instrument and join local musicians playing acoustic and electric guitars, dobro, fiddles, concertina, spoons--whatever strikes their fancy. The repertoire is mainly American folk tunes and audiences are invited to sing along. Entry is \$2 with discounts for families.

Holderness Historical Society & Holderness Library 2017 Programs



*****June 29 7:30 PM**

at Holderness Historical Society

“Abraham and Mary Lincoln: The Long and the Short of It” Steve and Sharon Wood



Distinctly different paths led Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd to Springfield, Illinois, where they met, married and began a family. The years that followed their move to the White House were filled with personal crises. Steve and Sharon Wood portray President and Mrs. Lincoln in this living history program, telling stories of their early lives and the challenges they faced during this turbulent time in our country's history.

*****July 18 7:30 PM**

at Holderness Historical Society

“Pleasures of the Parlor” Marya Danihel

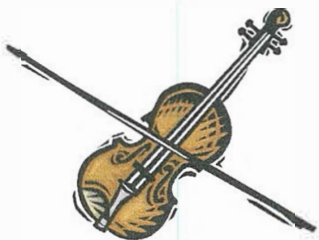


The music we listen to every day says a lot about us and our society and so it was with our Victorian forebears. Their favorite songs reveal much about their inner lives while also reflecting developments in the culture at large. Marya Danihel discusses and performs songs middle-class Victorian sang for pleasure at home in New England. Melodious, witty, and touching, this music includes parlor songs, Civil War songs, and selections by Stephen Foster and his contemporaries.

*****September 7 7:30 PM**

at Holderness Library

“Old Time Rules Will Prevail: The Fiddle Contest in New Hampshire and New England” Adam Boyce



Fiddle contests evolved from endurance marathons to playing a set number of tunes judged by certain specific criteria. Whether large or small, fiddle contests tried to show who was the “best,” as well as preserve old-time fiddling and raise money for local organizations. In recent years, the fiddle contest has declined significantly in New England due to cultural changes and financial viability. The greatest legacies of these contests were recordings made during live competitions. A sampling of these tunes will be played during the presentation, as well as, live fiddling.

***Sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council

