

NEWSLETTER



Holderness Historical Society

Fall 2018

Volume XXXVII

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HUGH RAMSEY - FLAX WHEEL MAKER



The Hugh Ramsey Flax Wheel in the photo above is on display at the Holderness Historical Society Museum

Hugh Ramsey lived and work in Holderness, NH. His home and shop were located at the southern most end of Shepard Hill on the White Oak Pond side of the road near the outlet to Big Squam. Records indicate that he was living in Holderness in 1779 and held several positions in town, beginning with tithingman in 1781 and later a selectman. He was a wheelwright who specialized in spinning wheels, specifically the flax wheel. He owned a sawmill and a large farm. Hugh served in the Continental Army as a private in Captain James Osgood's company of rangers from July 9 to December 18, 1775.

The son of Irish immigrants Hugh was born in Londonderry, NH on August 23, 1753 and died on June 23, 1831 at the age of 77. He married his

wife, Martha McNeil, sometime between 1781 and 1785. She was born on January 3, 1763 and died on October 23, 1835 at the age of 72. They are buried in the Squam Bridge Cemetery. (See Find a Grave)

Hugh and Martha had five children: Robert (born 1787-died February 6, 1815), James (born 1796 - died February 19, 1820), Clarisse (born March 3, 1798 - died 1859), Jane (born ? - died ?), and George (born 1800- died 1837).

Many of Hugh Ramsey's flax wheels have survived to the present day and can be found in museums, shops and private homes. The Hugh Ramsey Flax Wheel that is on display at the Holderness Historical Society Museum was donated by Richard Carson in 2011 in memory of his wife, Yvonne Carson. Hugh Ramsey wheels bear a maker's mark "HR" and share many design features with those of spinning wheel makers of Londonderry in the early 19th century. Flax wheels were used to spin the pale, hair-like fibers of the flax plant into linen thread. Transforming flax into linen was a complex and labor intense process and less common in the United States than spinning sheep's wool into yarn. The main producer of flax was Ireland. For the most part most Americans colonists produced small quantities of linen for individual household domestic use until the Revolutionary War when people throughout the colonies clothed themselves in homespun to protest parliamentary taxation and representation policies. The Historical Society has several items woven in Holderness of local flax.

References: Hugh Ramsey, Spinning Wheel Maker, Florence Feldman-Wood, The Spinning Wheel Sleuth Newsletter, issue #48, April 2005, pp 4-5; The Joy of Handspinning website; memorial hall.mass.edu.



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Linda Foerderer

The President's Corner

This summer, partnered with the Holderness Library, we presented three well-attended programs. We are working on the schedule for 2019 programs, which will be listed in the spring newsletter.

This summer the museum presented two special exhibits Native American artifacts from the collection of Mary Elizabeth Nielsen and Jack Rich and an exhibit of maps and lake charts.

Cataloging of our books and pamphlets in our research/library area to make researching families, cemeteries, camps, and other historical events and places simpler continues. Please check our website www.holdernesshistoricalsociety.org for programs, exhibits, museum hours, etc.

Your continued support by way of membership dues and contributions helps preserve our town's history and maintain our building, which received some much needed paint in the stairway. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please use the enclosed envelope to do so. We hope that more of our members will become more active in the historical society. We always welcome your ideas, help, and suggestions. Please contact me, or any other member of the board, if you can help or for more information.

Linda Foerderer

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Boulderwood on the National Register of Historic Places

Mooney Point had been farmed by the Mooney family, then sold to Ellen Balch Huntington in 1895 for \$2000. In 1918, she sold to Ora Brown and Louis Brooks. Elwyn G. Preston of S.S. Pierce, Boston, began to buy Mooney Point property in 1927 from Ashland businessman Ora Brown. By 1940 there were 48 acres with more than a half-mile of shoreline. Most of the property has remained in the Preston family ever since. The property was added to the National Register in April 2018. Historian Elizabeth Hengen prepared the nomination which details the architecture and history of all the camps built by the family. She presented the Society with a copy of her report.

Treasurer and Building Report

There have been no major projects this year but the stairway leading to our meeting room was painted and looks like new. We did spend on frames to preserve our map collection prior to this summer's exhibit. Like many Holderness homeowners, we have been running a mouse trap line this fall!

Our advertisers have been renewing their ads for this and the spring newsletters. Thanks to their generosity, we can keep the print editions coming. Please patronize them!

Contributions to the Summer Celebration were down. Discussions re the event are ongoing.

M. Mason

Autumn Watch

For most of the month of October over eighty members of the British Broadcasting Corporation telecast system were quartered at Camp Deerwood and camped out elsewhere around town. The purpose of their "occupation" here was to video for broadcast over PBS in the United States and over their own BBC domestic network, what was entitled *Autumn Watch*; autumn colors at their peak and our region's wildlife to go with it.

Josh Tarr was video director for the multi-person team which had been here since September. An eagle soaring out over the Rattlesnake Mountain edges was captured by a very long telephoto lense while other animals of the wild were recorded on remote surveillance cameras posted far and wide but monitored in the BBC's portable control room stationed at Deerwood.

From tiny voles to mighty moose and all our other indigenous species in between, a series of camera crews as well as remote automatic cameras scanned the forests around Squam and beyond for any activity worthy of documentation. The Brits love wildlife photography. During the heavy rains at night and on the rare occasions when the sun did shine, cameras followed the birds and animals as they prepared for winter or avoided their natural predators. It was a 24/7 effort.

Some remote unmanned cameras were able to follow their "prey" simply by the heat of their little bodies, all monitored back at Deerwood in real time.

Meals were provided by Squam Lakes Inn; White Oak Motel and The Boulders housed many of the crews. At Deerwood various cabins became editing rooms, TV monitoring stations or a broadcast studio with yards of cables to a very large satellite van occupied the camp's maintenance area. A bank of generators ran around the clock.

For those who missed all the action around town or the initial broadcast, catch it on PBS@AutumnWatch.org. Look for some familiar scenery.

Tink Taylor

Smith Piper Store

The general store which opened for business in 1888 and ran for nearly 100 years was demolished in September to permit construction of two townhouse units. The structure had been declared too run-down to be restored.

Reprinted below is a 1977 article by Ken Gould about the store's history from the New Hampshire Sunday News,

Photo on the right of the Smith Piper Store was taken in 1902 by Carol Louise Tilden & John C.E. Restall.



Old Country Store a Family Heirloom

Holderness, July 9 ---- A country store crammed to the ceiling with merchandise, where a customer can purchase anything from a tiny tack to a piece of cheese as big as a watermelon is still operated by the same family here after 89 years.

Smith Piper built his home with store attached on Main Street in 1888. About the only drastic changes over the years have been in the prices.....and as everyone is well aware.....they have changed dramatically.

Among the early entries in the records kept in a flowing script handwriting were the following: "2 lbs. frankfurters 25c; beef rib roast 14c lb.; tenderloin steak 25c lb.; one dz. Eggs 20 c; 5 lbs. bacon 79c." The listing went on and on always in cents, never in dollars.

Smith Piper was apparently a resourceful man, operating his own slaughter house so that his meats in the store would be strictly fresh. He rolled into place the barrels of molasses, pickles, flour, and crackers by himself and kept the "new fangled cash register," installed in 1897, running when it balked. The register, now ailing, is still a part of the store equipment, and there are plans to put it in service again.

CUT ICE

Each winter he cut ice on nearby Little Squam Lake and loaded the ice house, carefully insulated the cakes with sawdust to keep it from melting through the summer.

He took grocery orders over a hand crank telephone and delivered the orders with a horse and wagon in the summer and in a colorful sleigh with jangling bells in the winter. Through the three decades he and his wife Cora Bell ran the business and were not adverse to taking a few dozen eggs in payment for flour or sugar when some of their customers were short of cash. They raised two children Earl S. and Maude A. Piper; walked daily through a door from their home directly into the store.

Throughout the period, the area developed recreational business because of the Squam Lakes and the surrounding foothills of the White Mountains and thus the business grew...

LAKE DELIVERY

As vacationers flocked to the lakes, cottages sprouted along the shore lines. Piper, never overlooking an opportunity, got a small boat and started a lake grocery delivery. He ran his lake route, until the night before he died in 1927.

His wife turned the operation of the business over to Harry W. Welch, his son-in-law married to his daughter Maude. They operated it until 1946 when their children Lawrence and Corinne took it over. In 1972 Corinne took over the operation alone with the death of her brother.

For five years Corinne ran the store alone, cutting all the meats, sprouting the potatoes and pumping the kerosene. The delivery business had become unnecessary due to the increase in the use of automobiles and boats. Her husband James M. Cripps ran the local post office that was in the store for many years.

During this time Mrs. Cripps also served as Town Clerk and kept herself busy in the store buying the merchandise, stocking the shelves, waiting on customers and looking after their children Gary and Catherine.

This summer she leased the business to Jonathan F. Bourne and his daughter Catherine Bourne. He is employed at Holderness School but devotes time to the store. Mrs. Cripps, now Mrs. Maurice Demers, following the death of her husband James Cripps, still works in the store, cuts the meats and does the books. Just to keep occupied she has just become town tax collector.

Mrs. Bourne is assisted in the operation by June Cripps, wife of her brother who is an electrical contractor. Becoming familiar with the operation of the Smith Piper General Store are twins Deborah and David Bourne, seven years old, so perhaps the operation of the Smith Piper Store, already a landmark in the Squam Lakes Region, could be in the Smith Piper family for generations to come.



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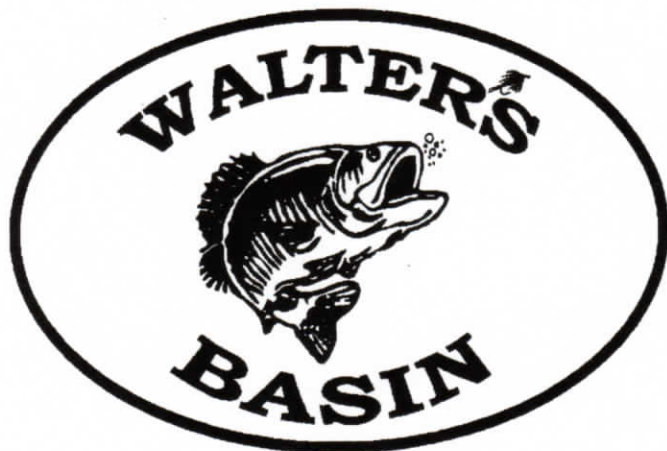
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Flowers on the Bridge

After one of the hottest summers on record, the flower boxes are empty and waiting for Spring. Those Profusion Zinnias are really amazing!!

We (Liz Greason & Cynthia Murray) have been planting and caring for the flower boxes for a number of years and have decided to retire after this season. We both agree that we will miss the social aspect of the job very much, chatting with the many tourists and residents who walk over the bridge on a regular basis and accepting compliments and appreciation of the work. It has been a wonderful and rewarding experience for both of us.

If any readers would like to consider taking over for us and would like to learn more about this volunteer job, please contact Liz Greason at 968-7620 or Cynthia Murray at 968-7161.

And.....of course, we thank all of you who have supported the *Flowers on the Bridge* fund over the years. To send a contribution, checks can be made out to Holderness Historical Society, PO Box 319, Holderness, NH 03245 with *Flowers on the Bridge* in the memo line.

Once again, we thank you!!

Liz Greason & Cynthia Murray

In Memoriam

Life member Harry Maybeck died June 21, 2018. He served as a town selectman, volunteer firefighter, and President of the Historical Society 2003-2005. His widow, Margie, was a state representative for several terms and will be moving to Idaho.

Local Hospital History

Dr. John Richards will speak at the December 12 meeting of the Plymouth Historical Society on the history of local hospitals and healthcare. "On call" will take place at 7 p.m. at the Plymouth Historical Society building.

Membership Report

October is the month for membership renewal. Individual membership is \$15 and family is \$25. Your membership money is important to the financial day to day running of the Society.

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please return the enclosed envelope with a check payable to the Holderness Historical Society.

Thank You

Cynthia Murray

Recent Gifts to the Society's Collection

Many thanks to the following donors:

George Abbot, owner of the Oriole, gave us several steamboat pictures. **Myrtle Holland** donated area postcards including a collection of novelty leather postcards as well as a cookbook and photos.

Dave Dupuis donated several rolls of old tax maps.

Peg Winton gave photos of Memorial Day parades.

Sandra Heath presented us with some of her mother's collection. Laura Greenleaf Heath was the longtime secretary of the Society and had 25 years of minutes, news clips, copies of speeches, local photos and Central School PTA notes. In 1976, with her husband Harry, she produced a survey of all headstones in Holderness' 12 cemeteries with the exception of Trinity. A copy of that survey was included with her papers. Laura, whose family has been in Holderness for generations, is now 96 years old and in a nursing home.

Carol and John McHugh, owners of White Oak Motel donated an antique bedspread that had belonged to John's mother.

Missy Mason gave a book of Ashland photos which was produced in advance of the 150th birthday celebration.

Tink Taylor has given us copies of Sandwich Historical Society publications as well as news clips concerning Livermore Falls digs.


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