

Windham Historical Society Quarterly Review

Fall 2021



Harvesting History Step by Step

By Susan Simonson

Greetings, Members!

The beautiful autumn season has begun and the Village Green is beginning to see some of the fruits of the labor we have done over the spring and summer months. Society members have been very productive with several projects accomplished and many more in the works.

We were happy to be able to open the Society again on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. – noon all summer long. It's been a pleasure to see people dropping by to do research or come to tour the Village Green. We were also able to host a couple of outdoor programs, an ice cream social in July and more recently, a trip to Arlington Cemetery where people were able to visit the grave of Lena Megguier, the young housemaid whose 1898 diary we have

been following on Facebook. They learned a little of her history and

were also introduced to Lamb family members through a fascinating presentation by **Walter Lamb**. We are ecstatic to be back alive and well after losing last year's season to the closing of the Society!

The Village Green is also coming along step by step. Some of the projects conquered during the warm weather months are:

Member **Reggie Grant** scraped, painted, and repaired the Village School door and railings. He also assisted **Sam Simonson** with prepping the floorboards for the South Windham Library. The floorboards were then installed into the building's ell by **Rocky's Maintenance**. Rocky Gould also built new front steps for the structure and

is working on the railroad platform and handicap ramp designed by architect and member **Bruce McLeod**.

Our Education Liaison **Walter Lunt** was kind enough to touch up paint on the schoolhouse. Now it's all ready to host students again when it's safe to hold living history classes once more. (con't on next page)



Haley Pal at Lena Megguier's gravesite telling the story of Lena's life



Top: The library now has new steps making for safe entry into the building
Middle: Rocky Gould and Steve Canapetti of Rocky's Maintenance installing a wood floor in the library's ell with repurposed wood
Bottom: A handicap ramp is also being added to the library



The Village School is looking good with a fresh coat of paint

Harvesting History (con't)

Haley Pal and her husband Andy researched and obtained a speaker and microphone for the Society to use when we have events on the Village Green or for programs.

Our curator and historian **Penny Loura** worked with a local stained glass business to repair a very old window that was discovered in the Old Grocery. It will now have a new home in the South Windham Library and we have the perfect place to put it.

Another member, **Jim Elder**, is preparing to loam, level, and seed the ground around the Old Grocery Store.

In addition, there are members working behind the scenes on various projects.

Linda Tetrault has been copying annual town reports that start in the year 1874 and continue forward. These will be added to our website that has been getting revised

and updated by **Haley Pal** and **Pine Point Creative**. **Paula Sparks** has been busy coming up with projects for the Junior Historians now that the school year has started again and **Kevin Graham** has been mowing and maintaining the grounds on a weekly basis.

This is by no means a complete list of this year's volunteer services. Every Wednesday, a dedicated group of members has been continuing to organize, plan, and keep records at the museum building. Queries that come in to the Society are being researched and acquisitions are tagged and input into our system on an ongoing basis.

The Windham Historical Society is fortunate to have such a wonderful group of devoted and ambitious people who are willing to work hard planting the seeds of history for our town. All their incredible efforts are sure to produce a rich and wonderful harvest.



WINDHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of the Windham Historical Society is to foster interest in the history of the town by presenting relevant programs, providing educational opportunities, and maintaining historical facilities where displays of the town's past are available.

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Windham Students Explore the Village Green

By *Walter Lunt and Haley Pal*

Last June, eight classes of Windham third graders took a little field trip to come and discover the Society's Village Green. Due to the COVID restrictions of the time, our usual living history classes in The Village School could not take place and this was a wonderful alternative.

Education Liaisons Walter Lunt and Jason Farley volunteered to be the tour guides. They walked the children around the construction site and discussed the six buildings we have in place thus far.

At the Old Town House Museum, the children were told about the history of Windham High School and the evolution of the Town House building that was used not only as the old Town Hall, but was also a classroom for Windham students of a bygone time.

At the Windham Center Library, also called the Windham Circulating Library, they learned that this was the first library we had in town. It was started by a group of

women in one woman's home and later served Windham Center for many years before the current Windham Public Library was built.

At the blacksmith shop, the students came to understand what a smithy did in the 19th century and the importance of his work, especially for the farmers in the community.

When they went into The Village School, the children were informed about a typical day in a one-room schoolhouse. Recitation, cyphering, and reading were discussed as well as many other interesting facts about the school days of yesteryear.

At the South Windham Library, the students heard about early transportation. The little yellow building will house artifacts about the South Windham section of town and will also serve as a railroad museum.

The last of the buildings on the tour was the Old Grocery where the youngsters heard about what it was like to be a cobbler. They were also told about items that would have been sold in a mercantile of the 1890s.

"Jason and I were impressed with the kids' extensive knowledge of Windham history and how anxious they were to share what they knew. Several commented that they couldn't wait for the park to open," Walter said. At the end of the day, both tour guides agreed that it was great fun for all who participated. Walter has been working with the schools this fall and there are more tours planned for this month.



Education Liaison Jason Farley talking to students about the Old Grocery



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

Saturday, November 13 · 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *By Linda Lunt*

*The holiday season is fast approaching
and that means it's time to start doing a little Christmas shopping!*

You'll be happy to hear that the Society is planning to have their annual Christmas Fair again this year. This is wonderful news since last year's event had to be canceled due to COVID 19.

Unless protocols suddenly change, this year's fair will be taking place on Saturday, November 13, at Friends Church, the same place it was held in 2019. Watch for the Christmas Tree sign in front of the church. Anyone who would like to donate crafts, baked goods, work the set-up, sell the day of the fair, or help with clean-up, please call the Fair Chair Linda Lunt at 655-3421.

For those of you who might want to contribute baked goods, they can be delivered to Friends Church between 10 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. the Friday before the fair. Please wrap cookies and bars in bags of two and breads and pies in see-through bags or wrap.

If you would like to rent a table from the church, contact Izzy Gilman at 207-318-0103. The cost for a table is \$25.

Among the many festive items up for sale will be pillows, lite wreaths, snowmen, Christmas stockings, jewelry, ornaments and lighted Christmas trees. Also, the Society's bakers will be busy as little elves making their usual delicious goodies. Cookies, bars, peanut butter cups, Needhams, and assorted selections of wrapped fudge and candies in dishes are among the tasty treats that will be available.

So be sure to mark your calendars!



We're
**HO HO
HOPING**
to see you
there!



Junior History Club Happenings

By Paula Sparks

It's the beginning of a new school year and the Junior Historians are off to a great start!



The club has grown in size and we now have eleven members registered. The first meeting of the year, a "Build a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich Archeological Dig," was a big hit.

The stage was set... a field alongside the Presumpscot River where members of the Wabanaki had once built fires had later had a flood. Then Thomas Chute built his log cabin on the spot. As we explored the area's history, the young historians, using peanut butter, jelly, and candy, layer by layer made themselves an edible model of what had transpired in our town's past.

When these edible pieces of history were complete, the dig began. The members removed pieces of the layers of the sandwich to see what artifacts could be found. The

grand finale was snacking on the dig remains.

During the course of the school year, the Club will receive a visit from an archeologist. They will do digs created in movable tubs. They will also have a visit from local historian and Society member Walter Lunt to learn about the Cumberland and Oxford Canal and will meet a local papermaker who will talk about that interesting art. Field trips to the Society and historic sites, as well as lots of hands-on activities, are also planned.

If you have something about Windham's history you'd like to share with the Club or if you have an interesting activity you'd like to send along, be sure to contact Paula Sparks at psparks46@roadrunner.com. Good ideas are always welcome.



The Junior Historians "digging" into their history and their sandwiches



MEET LINDA LUNT

By Haley Pal

Linda Lunt is a fixture at the Windham Historical Society. She has served as the Society's treasurer since 2009 and for many years, has been the dedicated Chair of the Society's Christmas Fair. She cheerfully coordinates the event during the busy holiday season, organizing volunteers, finding crafters who may want to have tables, and to top it off, she makes homemade candy, peanut butter cups, and Needhams. These delicious delights are sold among the many goodies made by Society members that have become legendary around town.

She was born the daughter of Carolyn (Morgan) Bailey and Robert Hawkes Bailey, Sr. and she grew up in Windham. She graduated from Windham High School in 1967 and two weeks later, married her high school sweetheart, Walter Neal Lunt. Walter is probably familiar to many of you. He is the Society's Education Liaison Officer for all schools and

youth organizations and has done many history tours with Windham students over the years. The couple has two beautiful daughters, Julie Lunt Farley and Kelly Lunt Williams. Both live in Windham with their families.

For 30 years, Walter and Linda made their home on Land of Nod Road. During those years, she worked for several companies, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, W.H. Shurtleff Co., Pepsi Cola, Unum, and Avangrid/Iberdrola (CMP).

When Linda's daughters were young, she took an active role in the Girl Scouts. The family also enjoyed spending their weekends on Thomas Pond in Raymond where they boated and water-skied. In 2003, Linda and Walter sold the house on Land of Nod Road to their daughter and Walter and Linda now live full-time on Thomas Pond. They love hosting sleepovers for their three grandchildren, complete with chocolate chip pancakes for breakfast and Grampa's family stories at bedtime.

Linda retired from her job in 2019. These days she spends her time gardening, quilting, and taking Zumba classes. She and Walter also travel to various places to watch their older daughter Julie participate in triathlons. They also attend Windham school sports events and are among their grandchildren's biggest cheerleaders.

When asked what keeps her wanting to be involved with our Society and continue on as our Treasurer, she said, "I've enjoyed building this position to where it now tracks all spending and income and keeps a history of both. This is necessary information, particularly with the Village Green under construction." The Windham Historical Society is lucky to have such an energetic and enthusiastic member as Linda Lunt. She is an asset to our organization and very much appreciated.

CONDOLENCES

By Carol Manchester

Two lifetime Windham Historical Society members have died during the recent summer months.

For a number of years, **Ernie Mitchell** assumed the task of mowing the Society lawns. At times he gave programs on behalf of the Society about King Phillip's War or his hobby, metal detection. Former Society President Linda Griffin notes that he loved to use his metal detector at the ocean to find jewelry or class rings, and if possible, would return the items to those who had lost them years before. He enjoyed volunteering at the site of the excavation dig of the original Province fort on River Road that took place a few years ago. He could be seen there every day while the dig was going on. Ernie passed away on June 17.

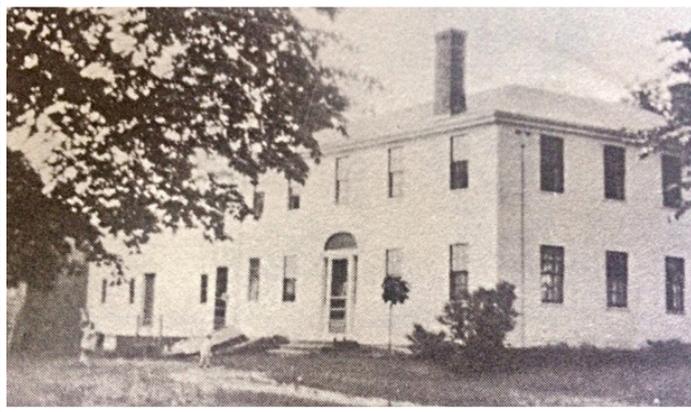
Longtime member **Betty Roberts**, 80, passed away on July 6. Betty was a Past President of the Windham Historical Society and had provided many family genealogies to the Society's archives. Following retirement from Fairchild Semiconductor, she began traveling the world. Reading was among her pleasures and she was a regular presence at the Windham Public Library.

Queries

By Penny Loura

- **Michelle Parvin** was hoping to find a new home for some of her recent yearbooks. We had all the years she was hoping to donate, but I thanked her for thinking of us.
- **Joe Ouelette** is doing research on ghost towns and asked for an explanation as to why Newhall stopped being a town. I explained that people do still live and work there, but it isn't as busy of an area as it had been at the turn of the 20th century.
- **Julie Morrow** was looking for a family member by the name of **A. John Morrow** who was listed as an inmate at the Windham Poor House on West Main Street. There is no listing for West Main Street in Windham, Maine.
- **Joe Noonan** was searching for an article he wrote for the Windham High School *Eagle*. In checking into this further, I found the high school paper was actually titled *The Eagle Observer*. Unfortunately, we have no archives for this publication.
- **Pasquale Popola** wanted a complete history of the town after reading an article written by Haley Pal. He did later purchase the book.
- **Judy Tubbs** wanted to donate a Windham Monopoly game. I told her we already had two, but thanked her just the same.
- **Thomas Hutchinson** was hoping to find the house where Edith Rogers Shaw lived. I found one place at the corner of Pope Rd. and Route 302. She also resided at the abandoned house at the corner of Windham Center Road and Route 202.
- **Mary Snow** asked if we were interested in Thomas Laurens Smith's history of Windham, Maine. She called from Batavia, NY. I told her we were very interested as many people request a copy.
- **Celine Pastore** was hoping to find a history of her house on Brookhaven Road. She was told by neighbors it belonged to the Mayberry family. I told her the houses on Brookhaven were built in the 1960s and that she was probably looking for Jasper or Maurice. I could not match the house with anything in our house books.
- **Kevin Allen** was researching his great great great grandfather Otis Allen and wanted help in his research. I was unable to find him in a census after 1860 where he was listed as a shoemaker. He died in 1861 and had four children under the age of 10 in 1850.
- Assistant Director of the Bridgton Historical Society, **Michael Davis**, was looking for our presentation of Steamships of the Sebago. The presentation was done by Dave Tanguay who sent him the Power Point.
- **Roberta Polland** offered her services with a scanner if we needed assistance. She is very interested in volunteering and we will definitely keep her in mind.
- **Ava Linda Stresky** requested a history of the Windham Correctional Center. I sent her a typed history, newspaper article, and a few black and white photos.
- **Tom Armbecht** wanted a frontispiece to *Dole's Family Record* and it was sent to him.
- **Lee Davis** wanted to know the date of the annual Anderson-Lord family reunion after reading an article by Haley Pal. I told him that the Society was not privy to this information and that we assumed it was a family affair. He contacted Haley Pal who told him it was a private event.
- **Patrick Bonsant** from Gorham Community Access Television wanted to interview someone about the Gambo Gunpowder Mill. We suggested Don Wescott from the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust and Mr. Wescott agreed to the interview.
- **Linda Griffin** was looking for information on the Parson Smith family on behalf of Holly Dickinson. I told her Holly was welcome to visit and look at what we have.
- **Leith Smith** was wondering what the original barn at the Parson Smith House had for siding. Sadly, the Society has no photos of the barn.
- **Braeden Cummings** is looking for a history of a house on Main Street in South Windham that he believes was built in the 1700s. I will be checking into this.
- **Merrill Rollins** is looking for diaries from the Civil War period. He'd like information about a battle in Portland Harbor and specifically about a ship, the *Caleb Cutter*, that was captured in the battle. I found no information, but told him he was welcome to come in and research the Cumberland and Oxford Canal, another area of interest to him.
- **William Harding** wanted to visit a cemetery that I believe is Friends Cemetery. He also wanted to visit John Akers Knight Cemetery, but it is on private land. I think the owner of the property is deceased and I'm not sure if people are allowed to visit. I contacted the town office, but have not yet received a response.

The Little Family was prominent in Windham's early days



An early photo of the Little house



The Moses Little house as we see it today

At the top of Windham Hill, right across the street from the Windham Hill United Church of Christ on Windham Center Road, sits the grand old home that once belonged to the prominent Little family who at one time were very influential in our town.

The first in the family to settle in Windham was Paul Little who had purchased a 60-acre farm on Windham Hill. In addition to farming, Paul Little was also a shopkeeper and he later became a town selectmen, town treasurer, and a justice of the peace.

He had seven children and the sixth in line was named Moses and it is he who it is believed to have built the hip-roofed Federal home that we see today. He married Hannah Horton in 1819 and the couple had six children.

Only three made it to adulthood. After son Augustus died in an explosion at the Gambo Gunpowder Mill, the only Little children remaining were Abba and Moses Henry.



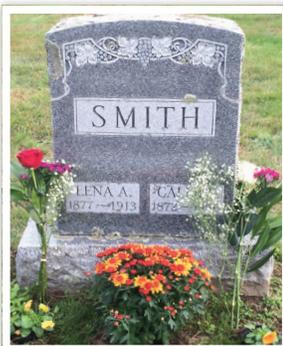
Moses H. Little's grave can be found in Windham Hill Cemetery

Upon their father's death, the two siblings and their mother inherited the estate as well as the family's store that was located a little further down Windham Center Road. Moses H. Little continued the family tradition of public service and was a justice of the peace as his father had been. He also proudly served in the Civil War and ran the family store.

Neither Moses nor his sister Abba had any children, so when Moses died, his cousin Fred A. Motley inherited the estate. It was later sold as a private residence to people outside the family and remains a private residence today.

Programs

By Carol Manchester



Visitors placed flowers on Lena's grave

Because of the COVID 19 restrictions this last year and a half, the Historical Society was able to offer only two of the usual spring/summer/fall programs of its annual schedule. "Pack a Picnic, Spoon a Sundae" was the July offering where Society members had a chance to do a little socializing while enjoying a refreshing ice cream treat.

In late September, Haley Pal and Walter Lamb did a presentation at Arlington Cemetery in North Windham. Walter gave an interesting talk about the Lamb family and Haley spoke about Lena Megguier, the young woman from South Windham who was working as a housemaid in Portland's West End in the year 1898. Many people who follow her diary daily on our Facebook page came to hear a bit of her history and some visitors even brought floral bouquets for her grave. We are hoping to introduce you to other long-time Windham families who are buried in Arlington sometime in 2022.

Meanwhile, there are several program options for next year that committee members may arrange, but at this writing the committee will finalize them at a later date in light of the continuing concern about new COVID 19 variants. There is, of course, the website, (windhamhistorical.org) the newsletter, and Facebook to help you stay connected to the Society and currently doors are open Wednesdays, 9 a.m. - Noon. In winter, access can be arranged via appointment. We all look forward to the return of the familiar and normal just as soon as possible.

Curator's Corner

By Penny Laura

- **Carol Manchester** donated *Sportsman's Year Book* by National Sportsman, Inc.; New England maps for Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island dated 1938; a 1973 *Farmer's Almanac*; a building committee report for the new high school dated 1964 as well as blueprints of the perspective sites for the high school; *American Journal* and *Courier Free Press* articles covering Windham's 250th Anniversary in 1987; three polaroid photos of the Parson Smith House in 1966; and a newspaper supplement containing the menu from The Barnhouse Tavern from 1992.
- **Kenneth Woodbury** gifted 17 pages of Manchester family genealogy and 14 pages of Civil War letters.
- **Paula Viarello** donated a toy Texaco truck, tanker, and oil carrier. She also gave the Society a wooden creeper with casters used to examine the underside of vehicles in the 1950s, a silver-plated tea set manufactured by the Cook Co. of Portland, Maine, two Picadilly needle holders made in Germany, two boxes of vintage Christmas ornaments, a fox jacket of her mother's from 1945, and a vintage wooden croquet set.
- **Linda Lunt** donated a small tote of plastic dollhouse furniture, a jar filled with assorted marbles, a Simplex typewriter, a children's xylophone, a weaving loom, an Old Maid card game, a red metal ping pong game, and other board games. She also gave the Society a child's glass tea set, a wooden pull train, and a small wagon with a teddy bear theme.
- **Diane Lavigne** presented the Society with a black walnut niddy nobby, a hand-carved 1814 glass spooner, a wooden stocking stretcher, a decorative vase, a glass knife rest, a pewter napkin ring, a rug beater, and a porcelain knick knock cover.
- **Donna Aikin** donated 19 pairs of ladies gloves worn by her grandmother as well as a silk kimono, a white blouse with button-up back, and a silk bed jacket.
- **Edith Bell's** estate gifted children's clothes including a red sweater, a pair of red and white mittens, three muffs, and a Campfire Girls book dated 1941.
- **Ray Philpot** donated copies of *The Suburban News* from 1988, 1990, and 1994 and a bullet mold.
- **Debora Gordon Longo** gave us a booklet entitled *Cooking with Evangeline Chapter OES, North Windham, Maine* and an antimacassar set crocheted by Ada Strout Hawkes, wife of Percy Hawkes.
- **Nancy Larrivee** donated tools such as wrenches, a box end, open end, spark plug, and socket hexagon—some specific to Ford, John Deere, and Mack Trucks.
- **Patty Libby** gave us a collection of correspondence from the South Windham Firemen's Auxiliary from 1951–1975.
- Three metal studs/cufflinks given to Uncle Henry Lord; four pins/metals belonging to William C. Hawkes, Presumpscot Lodge #127, a veteran's 25-year pin and a 50-year mason pin; and a collection of 75 Windham High School photos were given by **anonymous donors**.

Membership Corner

By Carol Manchester

The Windham Historical Society welcomes **Laurie Cavanaugh** of Portland and **Jim and Kim McBride** of Windham to the Windham Historical family. Laurie, Jim, and Kim are lifetime members, having joined the Society in July.

Welcome aboard! We look forward to meeting you at future events.

Donations

By Karen Lougee

- **Marlene Seavey of the Beveled Edge** in Windham donated labor and materials to repair the antique square window which will be installed in the South Windham Library, hopefully, sometime in the near future.
- General donations were received from **George Wilson** and **Jim McBride**.
- **The nieces and nephews of Carol Riley Perkins** made a donation in memory of **Betty Roberts**.

Thank you all for your generosity.



I Want to Join! Fill out the form below and write a check made payable to the Windham Historical Society. Mail to:
Windham Historical Society, PO Box 1475, Windham, ME 04062

Individual Membership \$15 Family Membership \$25
Lifetime Membership \$100 per person

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

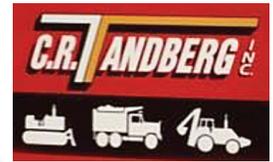
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