

Windham Historical Society, Quarterly Review

Spring 2020

A Message from our President Coping with Corona

By Susan Simonson

Although 2020 has sometimes felt like the year that never came, seeing spring flowers popping up and trees bursting with buds brings new beginnings to mind and gives us hope for tomorrow. We may have to social distance for a while longer, but eventually, things will get back to some kind of normalcy and we can enjoy each other's company again.

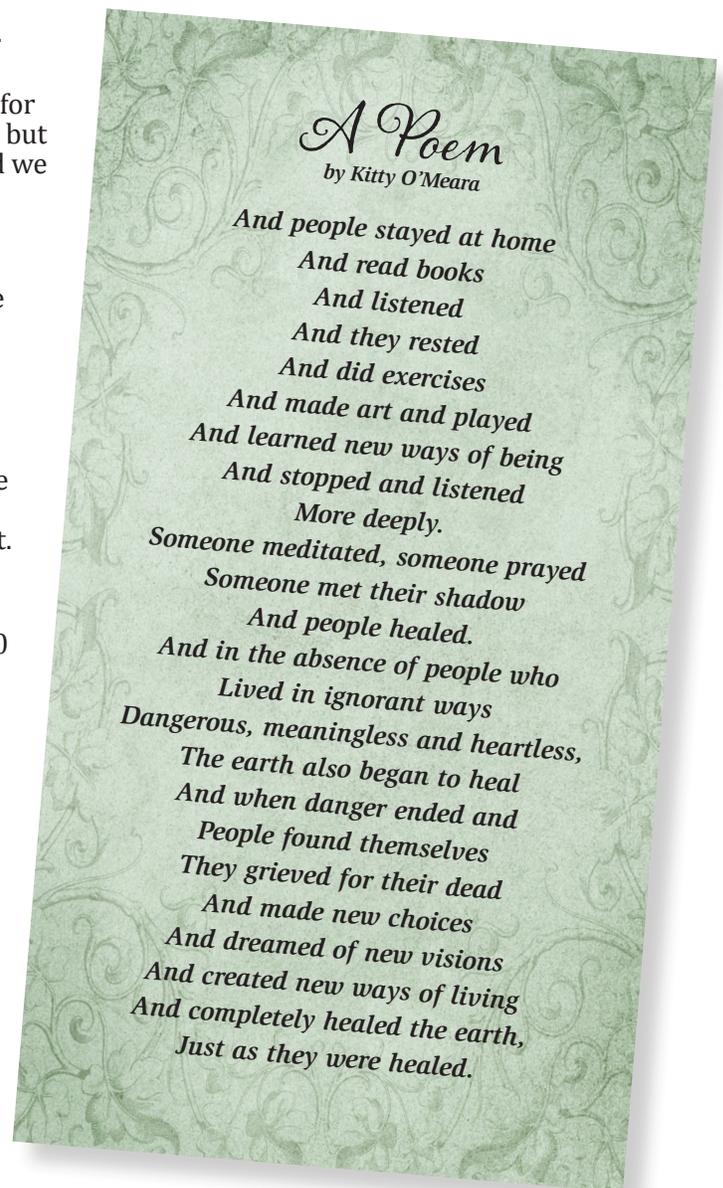
We started off the year on a roll with lots of fun plans in place. We had some interesting programs to present, the Old Grocery was set to move once the weather was right, and the Bicentennial Bazaar was getting a lot of interest both from Society members and from outside organizations. We were approached by the Job Corps of Maine to see if students in their program could assist us in any way. They could offer help building booths, baking fancy treats, and manning the booths if needed. Powerserve was scheduled to help with the grounds to get them looking fresh and clean. It was a year of tremendous promise. Then everything came to a sudden halt.

Due to the "stay at home" order, the first three programs of the year had to be cancelled, as well as the Bicentennial Tea. As of now, it's been decided to cancel all of the Society's 2020 programs in order to keep our membership safe during this pandemic. We do look forward to rescheduling many of the wonderful speakers we had on the 2020 roster in the 2021 program season.

We are also hopeful that the fall might yield more positive results. If conditions permit, the Bicentennial Bazaar will take place in early October, but no specific date has been set. If we can have the event, we will still have the food booths we had planned, but with more of an autumn theme. Instead of lemonade, we may be selling apple cider. Rather than offering strawberry shortcake, we may have pumpkin whoopie pies instead. We can only hope for Job Corps help at this point, but at least we can resume talks. Of course, we'll have to weigh the situation as the time gets closer, but we can all keep our fingers crossed that we might be able to enjoy the bazaar this coming autumn.

We are still anticipating the move of The Old Grocery, but it's looking more like the timing will be late August or sometime in September. We met with Dave Johnson, the general contractor, who stepped forward to lead the "Move the Old Grocery" project. As you can imagine, there are a lot of moving parts and pieces with a significant amount of coordination among the tradespeople. Dave's experience in building construction,

(Continued top of page 2)



moving buildings, and working with local trades is invaluable to the Society. We thank Society member Dorothy Samuelson for her devotion and passion for this project and for bringing Dave and his expertise to our organization.

Board meetings resumed earlier this month and now we can begin making plans for future events. In the meantime, we can make the most of this unusual time. After all, it is what you make of it. For me, I've been able to devote time to home projects that I know would not have ordinarily been completed. I'm sure all of you have accomplished things of your own as well.

So let's all hang in there for a little longer. Enjoy quiet time with your families. Get some yard work done. Go for long walks. Enjoy the warmer weather. And remain hopeful. We will all be seeing each other again and again we will all be having fun with history. Until then, stay well and we'll hope to see you soon!



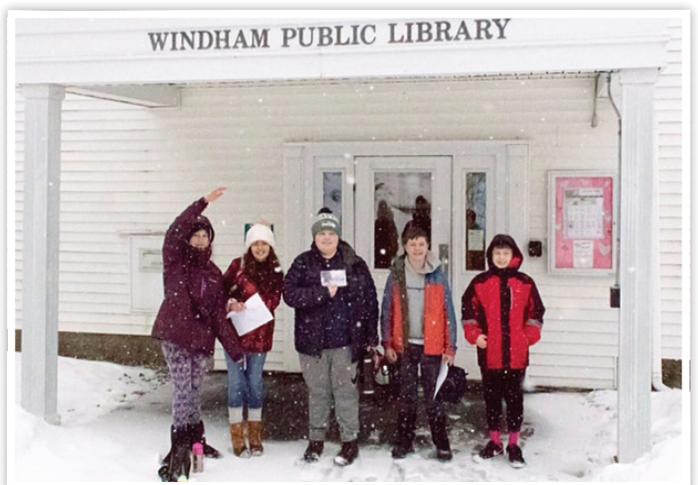
Middle School Junior History Club: A Hunting We Will Go!

By Paula Sparks

There are many ways to learn about history. Some of us lived it and can tell stories about it and most of us learned a little in school. But the best way to learn history is to visit and explore the special places where it has taken place. Learning about local history is the best way to begin. It connects us to who we are, and on a bigger scale, to the history of our country and the world. It helps us understand what we have in common with others and how and why we differ.

For the members of the Middle School Junior Historian Club, a field trip to explore some of Windham's historic sites was on the top of their "to do" list. They were enthusiastic about revisiting some of the places they had seen on their third grade history tour and were excited that they would be getting a more "up close and personal" look into the history of our town.

Arranging a field trip around town for six kids and three adults seemed like it should be an easy task. We already had an expert tour guide, Mr. Walter Lunt, ready to lead the trip. A historical scavenger hunt put together by the Historical Society and the Windham Parks & Recreation department was already in place. All we needed was transportation, which had to be a school bus. Getting a school bus for an after-school field trip was a bit of a problem. Saturdays were difficult as well. That left school vacation... in February. The day started out freezing cold with the threat of a snowstorm. Despite the advice to come dressed warmly, some young historians "forgot" boots, hats, and gloves for the trip. We had a 3-hour window to complete the hunt which had three levels of difficulty. The club members decided they wanted to complete them all. That meant getting to 18 locations and taking photos at each one before the storm hit in earnest!



The Junior Historians having fun on their history hunt.

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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The Society is temporarily closed due to COVID-19.

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By Haley Pal

Much of Windham's early history took place in a fairly small area of town, around the first settlement along the River Road to the Westbrook/Windham line and on Windham Center Road. Many of the scavenger hunt locations were in those areas and along the Presumpscot River. Among the places the Club visited were the site of the Gambo Gunpowder Mill, Babb's Bridge, an old schoolhouse, a library, and an old grocery store. We also explored the first town marker, the site commemorating the fall of Chief Polin, a wishing well, and a gazebo. We made a stop at the Goold house on Windham Center Road where we surprised the new owners who didn't know the house's history. We ended the excursion at the Manchester home where Mr. David Manchester explained beekeeping and let everyone try on a beekeeping outfit.

As we wrapped up the trip, the snow was really coming down and everyone was cold, but all were anxious for more. We made it to all the sites, got some great pictures, and had a wonderful time. We can't wait for our next trip once we can all get back together again!

The Village Green has been a sleepy little place this spring due to the coronavirus. It looks like it will be the same throughout the summer months. But as the days get a little cooler, we may start seeing it rising from its slumber.

The Old Grocery is scheduled to move in late August or sometime in September thanks to the efforts of the Old Grocery Chair Dorothy Samuelson and contractor Dave Johnson. There is electricity in the Gazebo so that if we are able to have the Bicentennial Bazaar, it will be all set up and ready to go for the Dave Rowe concert. It's not nearly as much as we had hoped to accomplish this year, but at least things are looking like they are coming to life again. And that is a bright light in this year that has been filled with a lot of darkness. It brings hope for all the good things that lie ahead.

A Shower of Flowers

By Haley Pal

How would you like to do your part in providing a little pick-me-up to some of our members who may be feeling a little isolated or out of touch due to COVID-19? Here is a simple way we can bring some joy to our older members that won't take a lot of time or effort, but will result in boosting spirits all around.

We're calling it a Shower of Flowers. June is a beautiful time of year in Maine gardens. So many glorious flowers bloom from lupine to lilacs to peonies and lady's mantle. If you have a few to spare, why not donate them to the Society and we can make them into arrangements that we can deliver to some of our older or more vulnerable members.

The week of June 22 will be the Shower of Flowers Week. If you'd like to donate flowers or an arrangement or if you know of a member you think would particularly enjoy receiving the gift, call or email **Haley Pal at 892-7139** or **haleypal@aol.com** or **Susan Simonson at 878-3417** or **ssimons1@maine.rr.com** any time during that week. We will coordinate getting the flowers from you. If you don't choose to make an arrangement, but have some blossoms to spare, we'll bring some containers and water along to carry your blooms home.

Flowers will be delivered to a deserving Society member either later the day of pickup or the next day. If you'd like to help with deliveries, we'd welcome you.

This is a great way to boost someone's spirits and probably yours as well.



Meet Paula Sparks, a Sparkling Example of Volunteerism at Work

By Haley Pal

Paula Sparks has not been a member of the Windham Historical Society for all that long, but in the time that she has been with our organization, she has proven herself to be a resourceful and helpful volunteer. Not only is Paula the advisor to the Junior Historian Club, she is also a member of the Schoolhouse committee and one of the teachers at The Village School.

Paula grew up in Windham's neighboring town of Gorham, but when she married her husband David in 1973, they moved to Windham and have been here ever since. She raised three children, all of whom attended Windham schools. During that time, Paula did home daycare, was a Girl Scout leader for seven years and she was active in the PTA where she served as President for two years.

Later, she returned to college and graduated in 1996. This led to her working as an Educator at the Children's Museum of Maine for three years after which she was a Program Specialist with the Girl Scouts, running Girl Scout Troops in Public Housing and in Portland schools for 10 years. She also volunteered to teach English to adults in Portland.

For the last ten years, Paula has been a member of the volunteer group, Brain Injury Voices, where she mentors others with brain injuries and facilitates support meetings. She is also a member, and sometimes teacher, at a small once-a-week women's art group.

In her spare time, Paula enjoys art, crafting and creating, sewing, entertaining, and exploring Maine with her husband. She is an avid ancestry researcher and she loves learning about local history. As a matter of fact, while researching ideas for the schoolhouse program, Paula unearthed some of her own and her husband's ancestral connections to Windham.



Paula and her granddaughter, Della, at the Statehouse in Augusta after Della served as a page for the day.

"I joined the Historical Society three years ago when I answered an ad for help putting together a program for the one-room schoolhouse," Paula said. "I really love learning from and working with the other knowledgeable and dedicated members of the group. Playing the role of schoolmarm, as well as forming and leading the Middle School Junior Historicans, are the highlights of my days. I look forward to many more experiences with the Society," Paula said.

She has a daughter who lives in Windham with her family. Her sons and their families reside in Bowdoin and New Gloucester.

Programs

For the safety of our membership and the community, the Windham Historical Society has decided to cancel all of our 2020 programs due to COVID-19.

We look forward to presenting many interesting programs next year.

At least we have a good head start in planning. Be on the lookout for what the future might hold.

The Windham Historical Society Bicentennial Calendar

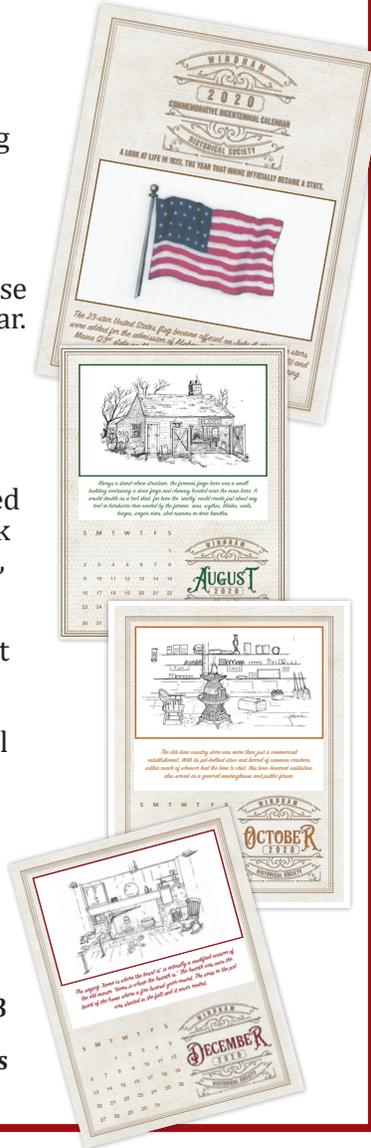
*The Perfect Way to Remember
the Year You'll Never Forget*

2020 is nothing if not unforgettable. We will always remember these days of self-quarantining and social distancing. Why not let yourself escape to days gone by when life was much simpler with the purchase of a Bicentennial calendar. These beautifully designed calendars are illustrated by the gifted Jerry Black and are enhanced with lively narratives by the talented Walter Lunt. A true work of art with a story to tell, the Windham Historical Society Bicentennial calendars are the perfect way to celebrate the 200th year of Maine's statehood, a year we will never forget.

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if you'd like a calendar.
We will make arrangements
for delivery or pickup.



CONDOLENCES

By Carol Manchester and Walter Lunt

Windham Historical Society experienced the loss of three of its members in recent months.

It is with deep sadness we acknowledge the passing of a long-time dedicated and enthusiastic member of our Society. **Glenn Libby**, who resided for nearly all of his 93 years in the old brick Haskell House on River Road, kept and preserved tools, the papers, and photographs of his life and family, and enjoyed discussing the people and the events associated with all these objects. Glenn generously shared many of his treasures with the Windham Historical Society. Over the years, he donated numerous items to our museum collection, including historical tools and Quaker clothing.

Glenn was born in Windham and attended local schools. It is interesting to note that his elementary school years were spent in the same building that now houses the Windham Historical Society. He worked in the mills of South Windham, drove trucks for M.L. Rogers, and later became terminal manager for Merrill Transport Co. After retirement, he developed Hillcrest Estates off Park Road in Windham.

Through his adult life, as a member of Kiwanis and various town committees, Glenn gave freely of his time to promote a better and more prosperous community. He is remembered as an avid outdoorsman who spent countless hours hunting and fishing, and enjoying moments with his family at their camp on Dundee Pond. Our thoughts are with his family and friends. Glenn will remain in our hearts and thoughts for a very long time.

Gloria M. Philpot, 73, following a long battle with cancer, passed away on February 27. While employed by the Route 302 Restaurant in Windham, she met her husband, Ray Philpot, (who has presented several programs to the Society) and they married in 1965. She loved crafting projects, gardening, cooking, and so much more, but family was above all. Gloria will be remembered by many Society members, especially for the cheerful help she often gave at yard and garden sales.

On May 20, Windham Historical Society member **Don Rogers** passed away at 94. A lifetime resident of Windham Center Road, Don was well known for his "impish smile" and the twinkle in his eyes. Cyndie Rogers recalls the teasing, laughing, and storytelling when she and her dad visited Don and they would reminisce about their daredevil days as young boys. Don was a graduate of Windham High School, Class of 1944, and was a regular attendee at the Alumni Banquets. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II where he trained to be a fighter pilot. He was regularly seen marching, and later riding in classic cars, in Windham's Memorial Day Parade. Dave Tanguay gives tribute to Don's dedication and support of the American Legion Post 148 in Windham. He will be sorely missed.

In May, the mother of member **Kevin Graham** passed away. Wishes of comfort go out to Kevin and his wife, Sue.

To the families of Glenn Libby, Gloria Philpot, Don Rogers, and Kevin Graham, the Society extends sincere sympathy.

DONATIONS

Greg Fearon

made a generous donation towards the
Old Grocery Store project.

General donations were made by
Alan Anderson and **Matthew Stacy**.

Many donations were made in memory of Linda True. They came from **Bridget Misemer, Anne Rohland Dickey and her and children, John and Carol Taylor, Kerry McKenney, Paul and Pauline Concannon, The Scarborough High School Class of 1964, and Barry and Kimberly Babb.**

Thank you all for your generosity.

Windham Then and Now

By Haley Pal

Boody's Store



Boody's Store in the 1930s after the Thanksgiving Day fire.



Nothing remains of Boody's Store today.

The North Windham we see today is a lot different than the North Windham of the late nineteenth century. Back then, at the corner of Route 302 and 115, there was a rambling general store that was very popular with the locals. Boody's Store was owned by Howard H. Boody who was one of Windham's more prominent businessmen.

The building was a barn-like structure painted white with a covered porch that made loading and unloading items more convenient. It was also a gathering place where people could stop and talk about the weather, politics and various pleasantries. Typical of general stores of the time, Boody's carried a wide array of products that would fill just about every household need. In addition to tools, boots, buggy whips, horse harnesses, lanterns, pails and rope, one could also find fabric, soaps, medicines, crockery, dishes, cartridges, and shells.

Countertops held overalls, denim and khaki pants and many other items that were useful or stylish at the

time. Children enjoyed visiting candy displays featuring peppermints, licorice, jellybeans, rock candy, lemon drops, and if they were lucky, sometimes chocolate. At Christmas boys and girls in town would go to Boody's and look longingly at what they hoped might be their Christmas gifts. Little girls might want a doll or a miniature tea set. Boys would be eyeing harmonicas and single-shot rifles. There was a big wood-burning stove in the store where folks could sit and possibly play a game of checkers.

On Thanksgiving Day 1930, the store was destroyed by a fire. The blaze took down several other businesses in North Windham as well, and it is said the red glare from the fire could be seen as far away as the Western Promenade in Portland. Boody rebuilt the store and it continued to flourish and remained in the Boody family until 1960 when the building was sold. Eventually, development put the final nail in the coffin of the store and Boody's Corner looks much different today.

Membership Corner

By Carol Manchester

Historical Society memberships occur in unexpected and curious ways. The Society's most recent member is Steven Langella of New Hampshire. Steve had read a book about Civil War soldier Joseph Manchester from Windham, contacted the author to follow up on the Manchester connection, and subsequently pursued his interest in the genealogy and the settlement of Windham. The Society is very pleased to welcome lifetime member Steve Langella.

And speaking of "staying connected," while the doors of the Society are currently closed and its programs at the Little Meetinghouse have been cancelled because of the coronavirus, phone calls, emails, and Zoom meetings still occur to monitor COVID-19 in order to reschedule or revise programs and events. Meanwhile, there are periodic updates to the website, www.windhamhistory.org and on Facebook as a way of keeping membership involved and informed.

Also, members are invited to share interesting and positive stories about their own experiences or of others effecting positive change during this pandemic by emailing your story to haleypal@aol.com.

These trying times will end, but in the meantime, be well, stay safe, and we look forward to seeing you again, soon.

Queries

By Penny Laura

- **Shelley Warters** had been looking for photos and information on Canada Hill. I gave her a copy of *The Way We Were* by Kay Soldier.
- **Jaime Beal** inquired about schools in town since Windham was founded. I found some material, but not as much as she would have liked. She never came to pick it up.
- **Melissa Spencer** was looking for information about John Cramb, Emma, and Lydia Granville. I was unable to help her.
- **Carol Ann Doucette** was hoping to find information on the Little Sebago sawmill. I found there was a mill at a place called "Suckerville" that was built in 1859.
- **Ray Marcotte** the Reference/Technology Librarian for the Windham Public Library asked for song ideas relating to the Bicentennial and the Bilodeau family. I gave him a copy of *Back to Maine* written by Clara Nash.
- I was contacted by **Ann**, a schoolmarm from Ohio. She was requesting school curriculum for our One-Room Schoolhouse. I believe Paula Sparks contacted her.
- **Jackie Huynh** was seeking resources for students 16 – 24 years of age. I referred her to the Bicentennial Committee for an assortment of projects. Haley Pal and Carol Manchester later met with her. She is with the Maine Job Corps and was hoping some students could help out at the Bicentennial Bazaar.
- **Sally Bannen** from the Windham Public Library wondered if the Historical Society would like to borrow a display case for upcoming Bicentennial events. I accepted.
- **Bob Clark** requested information, pictures, and dates on schools, business and construction, Town meeting notes, the Cumberland and Oxford Canal and various roads in town. Carol Manchester had a talk with him.
- **Sybil Howe** was attempting to find information on a house fire on Johnson Road that occurred between 1888 and 1920. I referred her to the Windham Fire Department.
- **Ethan Bump** wanted to set up an appointment to visit and buy some of our old yearbooks, which he did.
- **Gregory Cuffey** wanted any information we might have on the Little Falls Baptist Church. I told him he should check with the Gorham Historical Society.
- **Anthony Norberg** was seeking photos of the Lott Morrell Blacksmith Shop. I could not find any, but would welcome them if anyone has some.
- **Helmut Voith** asked about a place called Blue Paradise, a restaurant that served burgers, coffee and was also a place to dance. The landmarks he gave would indicate it was on Route 35. I checked with two other historical societies and with Ray Philpot, but no one could recall anything of that description. Since this gentleman was writing from Austria, I thought maybe he had mixed up Windham, Maine with another New England town of the same name. He assured me it was indeed Windham, Maine.
- **Adam Chase** was hoping to find a map of Forest Lake. Apparently, his newly acquired property and a portion of Windham leading to it were what was of interest to him. I enlarged a portion of Windham's 1857 map and he was happy with that.
- **Julie Young**, a teacher at Windham Primary School, asked for maps or brochures that we would have left over from the Bicentennial. I believe she was under the impression that the celebration was cancelled due to COVID-19. After talking with members of the Bicentennial Committee, I told her things were postponed, not cancelled altogether, and nothing had been printed yet.
- **Leland Sires** requested anything historical we might have about the house he recently purchased on Gray Road. There was nothing in the house books I could find.
- **Kathy Delano** was looking for Lizzie Jordan. After going through several resources, I found many Jordans, but none from her line. I did find a photo of a possible relative, which I sent her, but have not heard back from her since then.
- **Allison Hopkins** would like info on a General Store that was located on the Pope Road near the Pleasant River.

Curator's Corner

By Penny Laura

- **Donna Aikens** donated numerous articles of clothing, many of them baby clothes worn by her great grandfather, Fred Aikens.
- **Emma Gilman** donated many early photos of Windham including Windham Hill Church and the Gerry Mill. She also gave the Society several articles on the Cumberland and Oxford Canal and some old calendars as well as a Windham High School exercise for 1912 and a 1950 yearbook, along with two class pictures and more. We appreciate the gift.
- **Patty Buck** has given the Society four very old telephones.

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

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