



Freedom Historical Society Winter 2016 Newsletter

"Preserving Freedom's past for future generations"

www.freedomhistoricalsociety.org

Dear Members and Friends,

Where have we been? Since incorporation in 1968, the Freedom Historical Society has sought to secure our town's legacy. Many, many dedicated and caring individuals have volunteered their time, energy, and resources in the past 48 years to create an amazing collection of historical objects and records. We continue this effort because of the value we all receive in preserving Freedom's past.

As you know, we are 95 percent dependent upon you, our members, for financial support. You cover the operational costs and insurance; the museums' physical structures are kept safe and secure thanks to you. Your support ensures that we can continue to provide strong educational programs for both adults and youth. Finally, it is your support that provides the energy to the Board; it makes us feel that our volunteer work is appreciated and valued. We are extremely grateful.

Where would we like to go? Moving forward, the Board of Directors intends to focus on organizing and cataloging more of the photograph, document and ephemera collection, as well as to record more recent stories in oral histories. Our goal is to make it possible to easily find and link the pieces of history to tell the many stories of Freedom, and to make everything more accessible to the public. This effort will require additional resources for improvements to our work area; for storage cabinets and archival materials; and for computer, software, and equipment upgrades. This is a big challenge, but with your help it can be done! You can learn more about this goal in the newsletter article below.

How can we get there? We are making our annual appeal for your continued support and ask that you help get us to a new financial level in order to reach our goals. Returning your membership envelope now will enable us to execute the work we have planned and give us the confidence that we will have a balanced budget at the end of the year. Additionally, we humbly suggest that you consider including the Historical Society in your estate planning. This will give us a big boost in the years to come and help us continue our legacy – thanks to you! So, thank you, thank you, thank you for being a member, or becoming a new member. Your generosity ensures that we can "preserve Freedom's past for future generations."

We hope that you enjoy our newsletter and we appreciate any feedback you give us.

With appreciation,
John Shipman, President

The Freedom Historical Society Winter 2016 NEWSLETTER

Looking to the Future: Setting New Goals

It is the Board of Directors' vision that one day you will be able to visit your historical society, or sit in front of your computer at home, and pour through Freedom's historical records and memorabilia. You will be able to search all documents related to a person, a theme or a key word that will help you tell a story. You will be able to learn more about the history of your house, read news articles of what was happening in Freedom over the years, see old letters and photos, or listen to the voices of people as they relate their stories about Freedom.

In late 2015 a subcommittee of the board visited two successful local historical societies, Sandwich, NH and Lovell, ME, to see what we could learn from them. It was an eye-opener. The findings have caused the board to refocus its efforts on preserving and making accessible our huge cache of historical material so that the above vision can be realized.

The work on collecting these important pieces of Freedom's history has been ongoing since the society was incorporated in 1968. The last board (with significant thanks to Dotty Brooks, Bonnie Burroughs and Gale Morris) made huge strides in organizing historical documents into dozens of theme notebooks (see photo); they spent many, many hours creating a Freedom history 'goldmine'.



Now it is time to literally gather all the pieces together into an accessible, searchable form. We will organize all of the paper documents by topic and ensure their preservation, as was called for in the Board's 2013 strategic plan. We will use the Past Perfect museum software to document each piece as was done with objects in the house and barn. This will allow anyone to bring Freedom's history to life. We feel it is important that we keep our members and the citizens of Freedom aware of our initiative and informed about what it takes to reach this goal and the progress along the way.



FHS's Past Perfect software

Some of the initial steps down this path include ensuring that the resource room, where all records are kept, can be modified for year-round use. Right now it is just too cold in there to work effectively or for very long-- a severe limitation to progress. We must organize the room to focus on its purpose as a workroom and research facility. We must increase our storage capability so that original records can be easily filed and accessed. We must update and increase our computer hardware and software capabilities. We will have to get more part-time help to make serious progress. Our goal is to make all information more accessible to, and appreciated by, the public. You can see a lot of work and support is needed, but we hope its value is evident.

2017 Calendar



Painting by JP Jameson

The Freedom Historical Society 2017 Calendar will take on a new look! The Board of Directors voted to create a calendar featuring area artists and their paintings of Freedom. The details will be available shortly, but the plan is to have juried artists provide interpretations of Freedom scenes, covering all seasons. As in the past, the 2017 Calendar will be available for sale starting on Ducky Day in June. The Board has not abandoned the calendar photo contest but rather wanted to try something new in 2017. We hope it will be well received. Stay tuned for details.

T-Shirt Quilt Raffle

Work is underway to create an Old Home Week t-shirt quilt to raffle off this summer. Through the generosity of Mary Hockmeyer and other residents, some 25 different shirts have been obtained that will form a beautiful and elegant quilt reflecting FOHW history. Nancy Ferry is generously donating her time for this project with the help of Nadine Chapman who is also donating the fabric and materials.

New Exhibits!

We are extremely excited to announce two new, permanent exhibits to be ready by Memorial Day opening. Stay tuned for more information on the dedication events scheduled for the dates below. The displays will be exceptional!!

1. History of the telephone in America and Freedom (August 6th).
2. Fully furnished doll house replica of Chilton Thomson's house on Village Road (June 12th).

2016 FHS Educational Programs
(All at 7pm on a Wednesday at the Town Hall)

May 18	Old Time Stories from the Valley: Gloria Aspinall, Madison
Jun 15	Sawmills and the Women's Team after the 1938 Hurricane: Sarah Smith, NH Cooperative Extension
Jul 20	A Woman That Keeps Good Orders: Women, Tavern Keeping, and Public Approval: Sharon Blaine, NH Humanities Council (NHHC)
Aug 1	FOHW event (proposed) -- Silver Lake Singers -- hosted by Rick Holt
Aug 17	Having a Fine Time in Manchester/Freedom: Vintage Post Cards and Local History: Robert Perreault, NHHC
Sep 21	First, Second, or Third in the Nation: The Importance of New Hampshire and the Juggling of the Primary Schedule: Andy Smith, UNH
Oct 19	Poor Houses and Town Farms: the Hard Row for Paupers: Steve Taylor, NHHC

Carol Foord Memorial Oral History Project:



The passing of Carol Foord has been deeply felt by our historical society members, the heritage commission, our community, and the many organizations to which she contributed. She so generously shared her knowledge of local history, and many other talents with us all. Carol supported the historical society in many ways: as president, board member, presenter of programs of local interest, fundraiser, teacher, historian, producer of historical videos, author, and contributor to so many activities important to our Town.

Those efforts should not be forgotten and in her honor, and in recognition of her commitment to keep Freedom's history alive, we are initiating the Carol Foord

Memorial Oral History Project. Collecting oral histories will help to ensure the story of Freedom is captured and preserved. By listening to the voices of our neighbors share anecdotes, reminiscences and memories of past, we can experience life in Freedom at an earlier time.

As we collect oral histories going forward, they will be transcribed and preserved into both audio and written records and made available for review. We hope to begin and have some on the Society's website within the near future. Past-recorded oral histories are available to read or listen to at the Freedom Public Library or the Freedom Historical Society.

In Memoriam:

All members and citizens of our town are important and their passing is a sad event. Unfortunately in 2015 we lost some Historical Society members that were contributors and supporters above and beyond. We are grateful for all their support and send our heartfelt condolences to their families; we all will miss them.

Ted Action (1914-2015): Ted was a regular visitor to Freedom since the late 1940's and ultimately a full-time resident. Although known as a skier, kayaker and traveler, he was best known recently for his daily visits to the village store and engaging everyone with his travel exploits. And, of course, for living to be 101! Over the years Ted and his family have been steady supporters of the historical society.

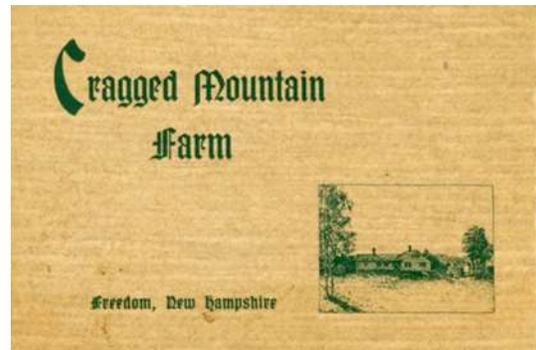
David Buswell (1929-2015): Our 2015 summer newsletter (available on-line) shared David's thoughts about himself and various aspects of Freedom's past in an oral history excerpt. He was a tireless contributor to the historical society for many years and served as president of the board. His energy was reflected in all of the fun and more serious activities going on during those years. He had a strong interest in Freedom and the historical society.

Carol Foord (1944-2015): Carol was a dedicated member and leader of Freedom's historical board and committees for many years. She gave selflessly and contributed at a magnitude to which many of us could only aspire. We are all so grateful to her. Fortunately her books, videos and body of work will continue to enrich people's lives. In recognition of her contribution, our Historical Society board is initiating a Freedom Oral History Project in memoriam to Carol Foord (see related article).

Frank Seabury II (1927-2015): Many know Frank as an avid outdoorsman, who loved to ski and enjoyed the mountains and the sea. But Frank was also a strong supporter of our historical society and served as curator from 1988-1992 and president in

1992. He took over as president at a difficult time for the society but kept the organization on an even keel. His dedication is much appreciated, as is the continued support of his family.

History of Cragged Mountain Farm



*Story copy provided by Christy Utter, winter 2016.

From an early camp brochure of Cragged Mountain Farm is this introduction:

"Cragged Mountain Farm was established to provide normal, healthful mountain life for children who are below normal for various reasons; an active, outdoor life when they most need it. The directors believe that most delicate children are best treated by carefully planned open-air life with congenial playmates, attractive, skillfully prepared meals, and regular hours. These conditions are found in the location and unusual facilities which Cragged Mountain Farm offers."

The History of Cragged Mountain Farm:

Dr. Henry Utter [1883-1975], founder, wrote the following letter to his son, Dr. Wilson Utter, both of Providence RI, in the 1940's to provide a record of some of the land's history.*

"This is to be your history of Cragged Mountain Farm, until 1925 always designated as the Brooks Place. In 1927, it was christened

Cragged Mountain Farm. Your memory changes as the years pass speedily onward and your conceptions of the Farm are those of the present day. The forest grows as we watch it not and with each year's growth the scene changes. Note the first pictures in your album and then think of the mountainside as it appears today.

The farmhouse was built by John Brooks [1797-1874], the grandfather of Alice Weeks [1869-1953], known by you in your early days as Allie Weeks. Alice married Herbert L. Weeks [1878-1947]. John Brooks is buried in the cemetery at the head of Swett's Hill. The property was bequeathed to William F. Brooks [1828-1913], the father of Alice Weeks. Said William F. Brooks was born in 1828 so it is fair to assume that in 1950 the farmhouse will be approximately 150 years old.

The William F. Brooks family lived in East Boston, Mass., and only used the farm during the summer months. In those days people did not travel the great distances which they do today nor stray over the whole countryside but were accustomed, as this family did, to settle in one place for the summer. They had a span of horses which took them to Snowville, Conway, Porter, etc., this was the extent of their travels.



The original John Brooks used the farm the whole year round and cleared the fields as you see them in the early pictures. These pictures were taken on glass plates by George M. Brooks [1863-1942] between 1895 and 1910. George Brooks was the brother of Alice Weeks; he died about 1942.



Our connection with Freedom lies in the fact that George Brooks married Anna Belle Brown [1868-1931], daughter of Thomas S. Brown. The latter was the brother of Cyrus Henry Brown, your father's grandfather and your great grandfather. His daughter, Elizabeth (from whence Betsey takes her name) Lovina Brown, my mother and your grandmother, with many of the Brown uncles, aunts and cousins and George Brooks met often at Fountain Farm owned by Cyrus Henry Brown during the summer months in the gay nineties. I spent many happy summers and your Uncle Ben many unhappy summers, which subject, you and Wilson heard discussed at length at Wilfred and Ruth Utter's house on Thanksgiving, 1949, at Fountain Farm in Dover, Mass. Fountain Farm was sold in 1897 and broken up into several country estates.

Your grandmother Utter went many times to visit Alice Weeks at Freedom in the

latter years of her life. She was so fond of Freedom that she enticed your father and mother to visit Freedom in 1924. My first visit had been on Armistice Day in 1919 or 1920, with members of the Brown family and your Aunt Mary Starr and Uncle Edgar. About ten of us spent two or three happy days there sleeping on corn husk mattresses at C.M.F. and eating doughnuts, cereal and thick cream. I did not return again until 1924, mentioned above when your mother and I bought the wood lot of 25 or 30 acres for \$2000. The brook runs through the woodlot which extends to the southwest partly up the slope of Young's Mountain; a stone wall still marks this boundary. There is a picture in the album of part of these woods; Herbert Weeks, your mother and John Brennan are in the picture. This lot contained the finest of the pine trees which were almost entirely destroyed in the hurricane of September 21, 1938. They were salvaged with small return to us by the United States government.

In 1925, developing a fondness for the place, we bought the farmhouse and the remaining land of 70 or 75 acres for \$2000. In two of George Brooks' photographs may be seen the wall running from the road from southwest to northeast, at the upper corner of which now stands the Hilltop Reservoir.



When we bought the property the meadow in front of the recreation hall, containing 17 acres, was mowed for hay by Herbert Weeks. He continued to mow this meadow until 1929 when it was planted with

four-year transplant white pine. These trees have done poorly owing to the white pine weevil which appeared in epidemic form about 1933 or 34. The meadow to the west of the infirmary was also mowed for grass. The upper part of this meadow and the land around the green spring produced many cranberries. The lot farther west, now a forest, was an orchard. These trees can easily be seen in George Brooks' photographs. We gathered many Baldwin apples from these trees at first but the forest has gradually claimed the land. There are still apple trees scattered throughout this area but they no longer produce. This area was planted to white pine in 1926 or 27. Your mother and I planted the first 200 trees ourselves, thereby appreciating the amount of work necessary. The whole area west of the infirmary was planted at the same time.

The present green spring was, when we bought the farm, a round well about the size of the spring hole which you know at Mr. Cosden's place at Pine River. The water ran through a lead pipe to a large barrel in the farmhouse kitchen. From this the water was dipped with pails. This had an overflow pipe which ran to the milk house shown in one of two old pictures on the south side of the road. Here was a trough into which the surplus water ran and was used in the milk trough to keep the milk cool.

The present well back of the farmhouse was about twenty-five feet deep and the water was drawn from this by an oaken bucket and well sweep, seen in one of the pictures. John Brennan caught a trout in this well which had been there for many years; it had an enormous head and a small body due to the lack of food. The cement top was placed over the well in about 1950 for safety purposes.

The building was used for Arts and Crafts was originally the sap house and contained a large brick fire box and huge iron pot used to boil down the maple sap. The present addition was built in 1945 or 1946. The present infirmary was originally the hen house. The addition was built about 1930.

In May, 1926 we bought 124 acres of land, including Nutter spring; from Fred Godfrey for \$1500. This land was properly surveyed and extends to the northwest to the Eaton town line, the boundary line of which is the stone wall which is crossed just before reaching Red Ledge.

In November, 1929, we bought the Pine River property of 80 acres from Bert Leighton. This land extends along Pine River for about one mile to the old county road which is now only a cart path. We paid for this property \$575.00. The Leighton house stood near the corner where the road turns to the right across the iron bridge. This area, but not the meadow, was planted with five-year transplants of red pine in 1931, 15,000 is number. On the west side of the Granville meadow a mile or more upriver from the camp ground we own 6 acres of grass land.



In the summer of 1927, we erected the four front Hodgson portable houses and thereby began Cragged Mountain Farm [Camp]. After devious trouble we completed our first season with a deficit of \$1054.00. Rosamond Shaw was the first director and Anne Cotter the first nurse. Anne Quarters ran the Farm in 1928 and Florence Littlefield from 1929 until 1936 when she died at the birth of Dianne. Margaret Langdon was head counselor in 1937 and 1938. Rebecca Gallagher head counselor in 1939; Mrs. Cyril Harris was director for two years and then William F. Dunbar.

Forestry [notes]: October, 1926, 26,000 white pines [planted] in open places of wood lot south of the road on the moraine and lower part of the south field. In the fall of 1927, 10,000 added in south meadow; in May, 1927, 10,000 white pine and white spruce planted in region of Utter Spring; October, 1928, 29,500 planted on eastern part of Cragged Mountain slope. Approximately 100,000 trees have been added to the natural growth."

[An added note from Wilson Utter: The lake property of ten acres (now 6) was bought in 1948 for \$1200. Before that we swam at what is called the Freedom Club of Boston beach just beyond our property]

Another update: This story has now come full circle as Dr. Henry Utter's great-grandson, Nick, is now running the property as a farm as well as a camp. See www.farmoncraggedmt.com

Many thanks go to Christy Utter for providing this story and photographs.

Freedom Historical Society Mission Statement

The purpose of the Freedom, NH Historical Society is to collect, research and display objects and records relating to the town's history for educational and cultural preservation. The Society fosters and inspires awareness and appreciation of the town's past through the records and collections in the Allard House and Works Barn Museum, and through its cultural education programs and publications.

2015-16 Board Members

John Shipman, President

Nadine Chapman, Vice President

Tom Luke, Treasurer

Sylvia Carney, Secretary

Barbara Buffery, Director

Dotty Brooks, Director

Scott Cunningham, Director

Rick Holt, Director

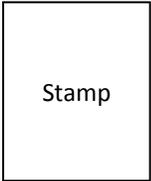
David Trook, Director

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