



The Marlow Historical Society's mission is to preserve and illuminate Marlow's history

Spring/Summer 2023

FIRE OF 1916

On the morning of August 20, 1916, a fire that originated at the Marlow Inn, consumed the entire north side of Marlow's Main Street, from Perley Fox's Granite State Evaporator Company adjacent to the pond all the way to the iron bridge over the Ashuelot.

Buildings destroyed included the Ladies Aid Society Building, Dodge's grain store, and J. A. Ayer's store in a building owned by L.D. Tinker, as well as the Wheeler, Crosby, Britton and Burnap residences.

It was one of the worst fires in Cheshire County history.

Harry Lewis, proprietor of the Marlow Inn, reportedly was awakened by the family dog's barking, but by then the fire was out of control. Only 10 of the 26 rooms in the inn were occupied, and all the guests got out but did not have time to take much with them.

The Keene Evening Sentinel noted: *"Ladders, buckets, blankets, carpets, etc. had to be relied on as there was no fire engine or powerpump and the two chemical tanks owned by the town were disabled or outclassed. Dynamite or axes, bars, hooks and ropes were used to demolish structures and make a stand against the fire on the north side, but the flames got by each time and swept on until the pond and river caused a sufficient open space to stop them."*

"The heat was sufficient to blister the paint on every building opposite the fire, and to break glass in the windows in some cases. Plants inside the windows of the houses on the south of the street were glued to the window panes and scorched to death in several cases, and vines and shrubs in front of the houses were killed."



"It took most persistent efforts of a heroic band of men, and women too, working incessantly, to carry water to keep the sides of the steaming buildings and their roofs wet until the excessive heat of the fire was over. To enable the men on the ladders and the street to stick to their posts, they too had to have water thrown upon them."

The Historical Society of Cheshire County's Monadnock Moment No. 009 noted: *"Despite heroic efforts to control the blaze, curious visitors to the town the next morning were faced with a scene of utter destruction. People milled about, furnishings were scattered along the street and the entire north side of Main Street was a wasteland of chimneys and ashes."*

What caused the fire? The Evening Sentinel cites *"some unknown cause either around the kitchen chimney or shed at the Marlow Inn."* In Chapter XIX of his History of Marlow, Elgin Jones writes about the *"disastrous fire having its mysterious origin in the Hotel"*.



An anonymous individual attributed the fire to something more nefarious! Among documents found in our archives concerning the fire, there are two faded, unsigned typewritten sheets. Identical pages are in the Historical Society of Cheshire County files. No one recalls when or how they came to be at either location.

According to the nameless author: *"...another story began to circulate through the grapevine. According to this story the fire was no mere accident, but rather a deliberate act of arson on the part of the proprietor. At first this story was no more than an ugly rumor, but as time went by it was discovered that there may have been a motive. It seems that the proprietor was eager to obtain a license for the sale of liquor in the Marlow Inn and his request was turned down. According to the story the refusal made the proprietor so insanely irate that he decided to set fire to the inn, which, by the way, was virtually a landmark due to its reputation for excellent service and comfortable accommodationsAnother circumstance that strengthened this story is that shortly afterwards it was claimed that many of the proprietor's personal*

belongings were found to have been moved to his cabin located outside of town.”

The mystery writer acknowledges, “This story has not been proven true or false beyond a shadow of a doubt, and probably never will be, but in any case the fire that resulted is implanted in the memories of those who witnessed it as a truly terrible happening in the history of the town of Marlow.”



THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD

This little engine has an identity crisis. Although it’s been called a “pumper” for decades, deep down in its metal core it knows that’s not quite true.

This is how the system actually works: There’s a copper tank that holds a mixture of water and baking soda. Within the tank, a powerful acid, like sulfuric acid, is held in a glass jar. When it is time to use the chemical system, the glass is inverted to release the acid into the soda water. This causes a chemical reaction that releases carbon dioxide, creating pressure which forces the water out of the tank through a hose. So, there is no “pumping”!

However, the little engine is OK with being called “the pumper” out of nostalgia, and because it has a heart that pumps with love for the town of Marlow.

The 1910 “pumper” was used to fight the Marlow fire of 1916 as well as the fire of 1941. It is stored in the Hearse House that is owned by the Marlow Historical Society. We hope to find a more secure and dignified spot for it in the near future.



The “pumper” after the 1916 fire.

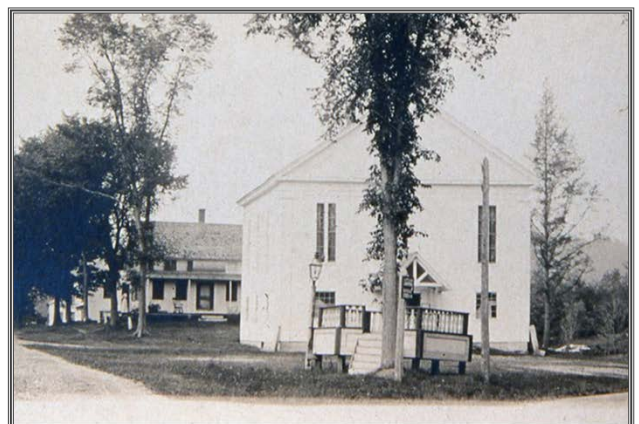
KEENE EVENING SENTINEL, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1925.

KEENE MAN DEEDS MARLOW LAND IN REAR OF HALL

Elgin A. Jones of this city, a former resident of Marlow, presented to the town the land in the rear of Jones hall, where the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Winham stood. The Winham home was destroyed by fire, March 28, 1923. As the land joined Jones hall, which Mr. Jones formerly presented to the town. Mr. Jones purchased the land and has deeded it to the town of Marlow. Mr. Jones has made a number of generous gifts to the town.

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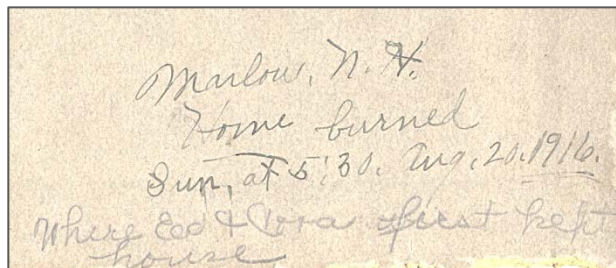
The Winham house before it burned, behind Jones Hall

SOMETIMES HISTORY FINDS US

Gathering historical data requires painstaking research. But sometimes, if you're lucky, the information just arrives in the mail.



While working on the article on the Fire of 1916, we received this photo of a lovely residence that went down in flames together with other buildings on the north side of Marlow's lower Main Street. Written in the back are these words: "Marlow, N.H. Home burned Sun. at 5:30 Aug. 20, 1916. Where Ed & Cora first kept house." The photo, and many others were sent by Mr. Tom Britton of Deerfield, NH. Ed and Cora were his grandparents.



Tom Britton shared that Edward Levi Britton (1887-1950) was born in Providence, RI and died in Exeter NH. He married Cora B. Reed (1890-1984) in Gilsum, NH. Cora was born in Stoddard, NH, and died in Northampton, MA.

Edward farmed, owned a mine in Alstead, carried the mail between Keene and Lempster, and owned a motel in the White Mountains, as well as a dance hall in Marlow. We might call him "a man for all seasons".

We are more familiar with Edward's intrepid sister Allison (Alice) (1889-1959), who was a stage coach driver, school bus driver and mail carrier for many years, perhaps because she stayed in Marlow her whole life*, while Ed moved around. However, we have now learned that brother and sister sometimes went into business together.

They established the Britton Feldspar Mine in Alstead in the 1920s, on land around Lake Warren owned by their grandfather Levi, a Civil War veteran.** They also owned the Riverside Pavilion dance hall, and the Riverside Lunch & Filling Station on Marlow's lower Main Street. The site was later the **location the Morrell Cabins**, and then the former Marlow Store on Route 10.

Ed and Alice's parents were Charles Britton (1856-1917) and Jeanette Wilson (1864-1914). Jeanette was born in Scotland and arrived in the U.S. in 1880. Charles was a farmer, mail man, and hotel keeper, and he did horse racing. Their house also burned down in the 1916 fire.

* From 1922 to 1953 Alice lived on Marlow's Upper Main Street, at the house that is now 166 Forest Rd. She sold it to Robert and Pauline Parker. It was later the home of Scott and Donna Chase. See our Spring/Summer 2022 and Fall 2022 newsletters.

**Levi Britton was in Co. A, 18th Regt. N.H.V and was mentioned in the Civil War Journal of Corp. Ezra G. Huntley



Ed Britton and Cora Reed wedding
March 12, 1910



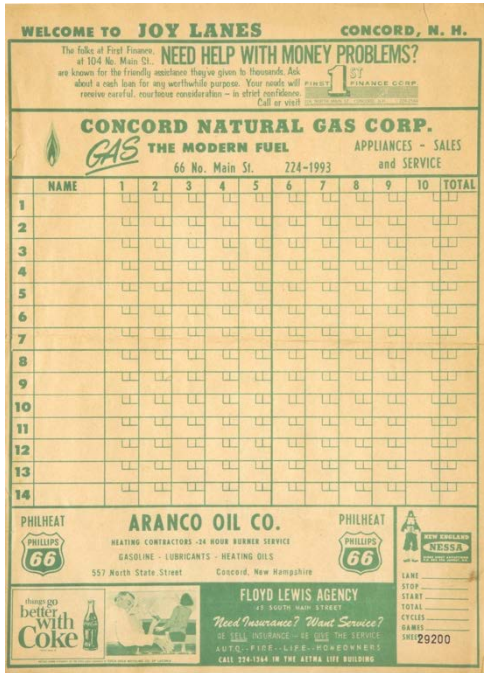
Riverside Lunch and Filling Station



Charles Britton on his sulkies

TRANSCRIPT OF A HAND-WRITTEN DOCUMENT RELATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRE DEPARTMENT IN THE TOWN OF MARLOW IN 1934 AND ITS EVOLUTION UP TO THE YEAR 1947

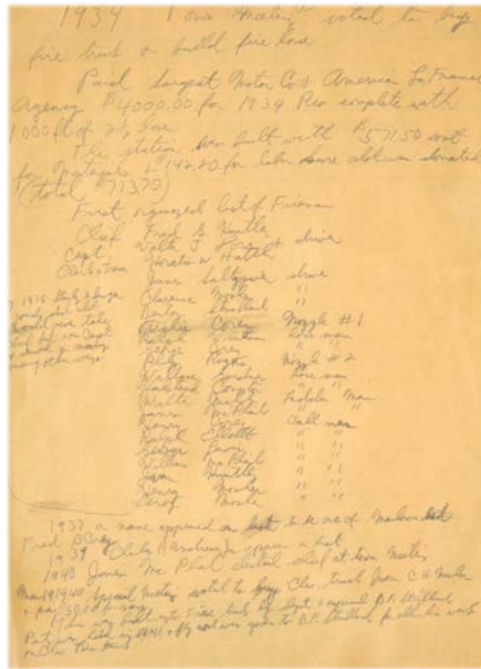
This history was written in the back of bowling score sheets from Joy Lanes, Concord, NH



1934 Town Meeting voted to buy fire truck and build fire house.
 Paid Sargent Motor Co. and American La France Agency \$4000 for 1934 Reo complete with 1000 ft. of 2 1/2 hose
 The station was built with \$571.50 cost for Materials & \$142.20 for labor.
 Sure a lot was donated. (total \$713.70)

First organized list of Firemen:

- Chief Fred G. Huntley
- Capt. Walter J. Voss driver
- Clerk & Treas. Horatio W. Hatch
- James Saltzgiver driver
- Clarence Mosher "
- Berton Strickland "
- Archie Corey Nozzle# 1
- Ralph Winham hose man
- George Corey " "
- Philip Rogers Nozzle # 2
- Wallace Gardner hose man
- Halsted Compton " "
- Walter Nichols Ladder Man
- James McPhail " "
- Henry Corey Call man
- Ralph Elliott " "
- George Lewis " "
- William McPhail " "
- Ivan Huntley " "
- Henry Mosher " "
- Leroy Mosher " "



1936 Stanley A. Sawyer joined did a lot would never take Chief but was Captain & served in many many other ways.

1937 a name appeared on list to be one of Marlow's best Fred B. Corey.

1939 Charles R. Andrews Jr. appears on list

1940 James McPhail elected chief at Town Meeting.

Mar 19, 1940 Special Meeting voted to buy Chev. truck from C H Mosher & pay \$50.00 for same.

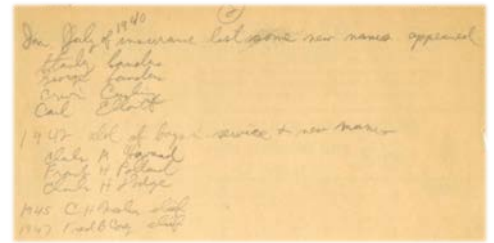
This was built into Fire Truck by dept. and especially B F. Strickland. Party was held in 1941 and fly rod was given to B.F. Strickland for all his work on Chev. Rre Truck.

In July of 1940 insurance list some new names appeared.

- Stanley Sanders
- George Sanders
- Eiwin Cushing
- Carl Elliott

1942 a lot of boys in service & new names

- Charles M. Howard
- Frank H. Pollard



DID YOU KNOW?



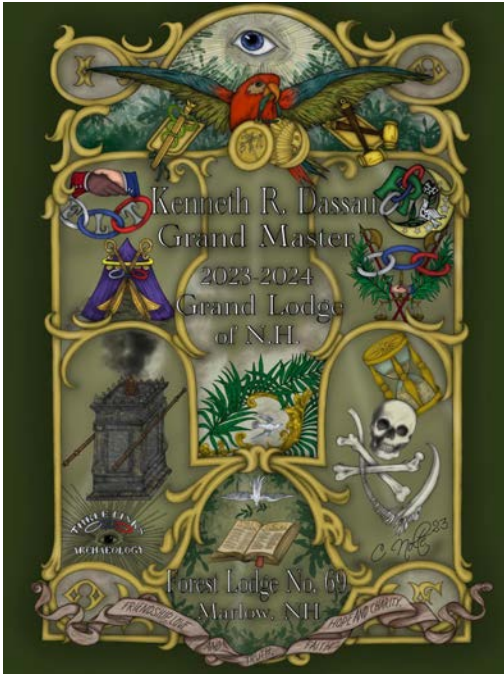
First Vermont state flag 1803

Soon after the Declaration of Independence, a number of western New Hampshire towns, including Marlow, seceded from New Hampshire and joined Vermont, eliminating the Connecticut River as a border. In 1782, prodded by a letter from George Washington, Vermont renounced jurisdiction over all towns east of the river and Marlow became part of New Hampshire once again.



First New Hampshire state flag 1909

A HISTORIC FIRST FOR MARLOW'S ODD FELLOWS FOREST LODGE #69



Kenneth R. Dassau has been elected to serve as the 176th Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of NH. Installation took place on Saturday April 22, 2023.

Tom Cassar took the Grand Lodge degree and was installed as the Grand Chaplain for the year 2023-2024.

MARLOW'S FOREST LODGE NO. 69 ODD FELLOWS AND THE NH ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

By Kenneth R. Dassau, Recording Secretary

Before the emergence of fast food, take-out and throw-away items, Marlow roads were not sullied by trash. It's hard to visualize anyone throwing things out the window of a stagecoach or carriage, though it likely happened from time to time.

It was not until the latter part of the 1800s that mass-produced cigarettes began to replace hand rolled cigars and pipes. Aluminum cans arrived in 1959; and plastic and disposable packaging became increasingly popular in the 1960s. Today those items constitute the bulk of our roadside litter.

Marlow historian Tracy Messer believes that the automobile age made things worse, since "local residents generally take pride in the appearance of their own communities, but passersby not as much." Alan Rumrill, president of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, recalls that by the late 1960s or early 1970s the roads were covered with litter, more so than today. Eventually the state launched anti-litter campaigns, and imposed fines. Beverage container redemption programs and recycling initiatives also helped mitigate the problem.

In March of 1994, the NH Department of Transportation (DOT) began its Clean and Scenic program and invited citizens, civic groups, and businesses to participate in its Adopt-A-Highway program. It required that the groups commit to a minimum of two years.

In June 1998 the members of Marlow's Independent Order of Odd Fellows Forest Lodge No. 69 applied to be part of the program. The first chairman was Charles Warren, who served until 2004. Charlie Strickland held the position until 2007 and was followed by Bill Plotts. In 2015, while Bill was still chairman, he listed Ken Dassau as the "responsible officer" on the DOT renewal application, and Ken assumed the job in 2016.

The Odd Fellows' objective is obvious: to keep Marlow roads clean and to take pride in the appearance of our town. Our section of highway covers Route 10 from the Lempster border in the north to the Gilsum border in the south.

The road has been divided into nine sections of approximately one mile each. Ideally, we assign a minimum of two people for each of the sections, but certainly more assistance is welcome, especially along the more challenging areas where adequate space to pull over is lacking. The DOT protocol is to not pick up anything suspected to be toxic. When in doubt we notify the DOT.

The Lodge has sponsored at least one annual Spring clean-up every year with the exception of 2020, and that was due to Covid. On the I Like Marlow Facebook page in the spring of 2021 I wrote, "It's not enjoyable under the best conditions to go out on the road and pick up a stranger's tossed soda and beer cans, nip bottles, fast-food wrappers, or whatever other yucky things we find. So, the addition of a death-causing virus understandably didn't exactly have people lining up to get out on the road. And so, our section of Route 10 from the Gilsum boundary to the Lempster boundary is now pretty messy, as recent posts on ILM FB have pointed out."



Though Forest Lodge's contract with the DOT covers only Route 10 between our southern and northern borders, we support other local groups such as the ATV Club who clean up other Marlow roads. The Lodge shares DOT blue collection bags and orange "Road Crew" signs with groups who request them. We also acknowledge and appreciate individual residents who monitor and collect trash along the road near their homes, and all volunteers get a complimentary coupon to our monthly breakfast.

According to the DOT's Welcome to the NHDOT Sponsor A Highway publication by Caleb Dobbins, "Since the NH DOT sponsor a highway began, thousands of volunteers representing over 700 groups have maintained over 1500 miles of NH roadside with over 130,000 bags of litter removed from our roadsides. The value of the program is not only measured in the financial savings to the taxpayers, but in the dedicated hours that hundreds of volunteers have unselfishly donated to keep New Hampshire beautiful for all of us."

VISIT THE DELIGHTFUL VILLAGE OF MARLOW

Summer visitors started coming to local towns in the late 19th century. They would take the train, and then a carriage, usually renting or leasing lodging near lakes. Some of them would buy lots and build cottages, or else buy old farmhouses as second homes. They would stay two weeks or more. "Weekenders" didn't arrive until the 1920s -1940s when more reliable automobiles allowed for travel between first and second homes.*

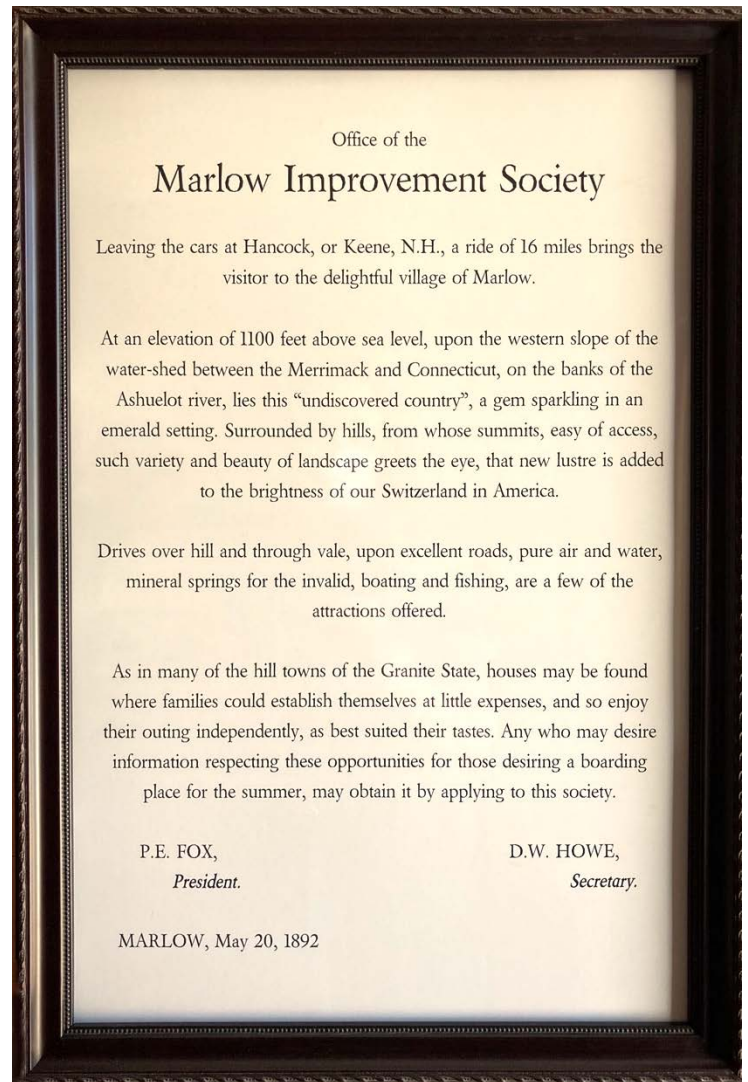
Lacking golf, ski resorts, lakes...or access by train, Marlow was never a magnet for tourists. An electric trolley line which was planned in 1901 to run from Keene all the way to Gilsum and Marlow never materialized.** The town's main asset was its bucolic tranquility, which the Marlow Improvement Society promoted. In the early 1900s the Robb Brothers Sanitarium offered a peaceful retreat to heal "mild mental and nervous cases".***

This poster from the Office of the Marlow Improvement Society hangs in the Historical Society Museum in Murray Hall. The only information we have found about the Improvement Society is the following note in the *Keene Evening Sentinel* of April 5, 1892: "A meeting of citizens was held at Jones hall last Saturday evening and an organization formed to be known as "The Marlow Improvement Society. A board of officials was elected as follows - President, P. E. Fox; vice president, J. M. Howard; secretary, D. W. Howe; treasurer, J. M. Perkins. E. A. Fox, E. A. Jones and Geo F. Gee were elected to constitute with the other officers an executive committee. The next meeting will be held Saturday evening, April 9."

* See "Route 10: A Scenic Byway" in the Winter 2019 newsletter to read about the inns, cabins, restaurants, gift shops, etc. all along the road to accommodate travelers when Route 10 was the main route north to the White Mountains.

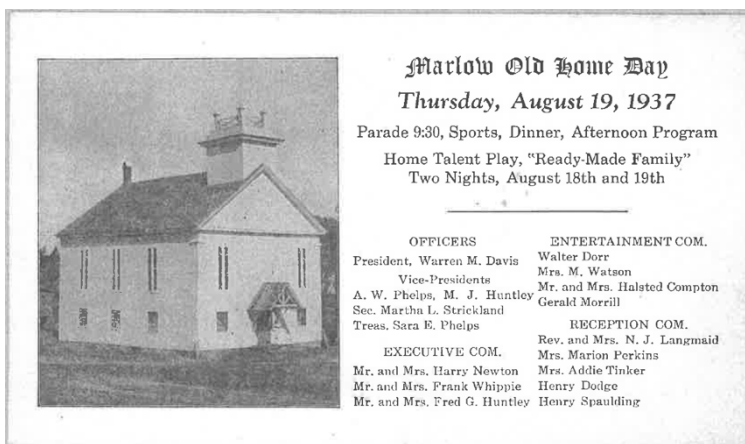
**See "Tidbits from Marlow History" in our Fall 2017 newsletter.

***See "A Scan of Marlow's Medical History" in our Spring/Summer 2020 newsletter to read more about the Sanitarium.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Old Home Day tradition originated in the late 19th century. In 1899 N.H. Governor Frank Rollins created an official Old Home Week Association and made a nationwide appeal to past residents of New Hampshire small towns to return home and rediscover and honor their roots.



A CORRECTION

We thank Emily Bomely for pointing out that her father's name was Halsted Compton. This photo of Halsted that we featured in the Winter 2023 newsletter is incorrectly labeled in the Old Home Days scrapbook that was discovered in the Historical Society museum. The picture is from the 1961 Marlow Bicentennial. We will be sure to keep this in mind for future references.



*Odd Fellows Float
Halsted Compton as Lincoln*

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

To the Honorable Justices of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Cheshire

Your petitioners represent that for the accommodation of the public, there is ~~now~~ occasion for a new highway in the town of Marlow in said County; beginning at the south end of the highway at or near the house of Charles D. Symonds, formerly owned by George W. Fox, and thence running southerly to the highway, at the east end of the Ashuelot bridge, westerly and near Bethuel Farley's dwelling house in said town.

We further represent that the selectmen of said town of Marlow have been requested in writing to lay out said highway but have neglected and refused so to do.

Therefore we respectfully request your Honors to lay out on the route above described, a highway of the width of three rods agreeably to the provisions of the statute in such case provided. (Signed) John Symonds and forty nine others

Marlow July 13, 1852

State of New Hampshire
Cheshire County, N.H.
Court of Common Pleas, Clerk's Office, Keene Aug. 9, 1852

To John Symonds, one of the aforesaid petitioners

Upon the filing of the foregoing petition, It is ordered that the petitioners give notice to the town of Marlow in said County to appear at the Court of Common Pleas next to be holden at Keene in and for said County on the second Tuesday of September next, and show cause if any they have, why the prayer of said petition should not be granted, by causing said attested copy of said petition and of this order to be served upon one of the selectmen and the town clerk, each, of said town of Marlow at least thirty days before said second Tuesday of September next

Attest L. Bischo Clerk

A true copy of the original petition & order
Attest. Thos. Bischo Clerk

In the year 1852, a group of Marlow citizens requested of the town selectmen that a road be built **“for the accommodation of the public....beginning at the south end of the highway at or near the house of Charles D. Symonds, formerly owned by George W. Fox, and thence running southerly to the highway at the east end of the Ashuelot bridge, westerly and near Bethuel Farley's dwelling house.”**

Charles D. Symonds lived and had a tannery at the junction of Symondsville Road and Washington Pond Road. The Christmas Trees Inn was Bethuel Farley's home, and headquarters for his successful ink and extract business.

We have in our files a copy of the petition to the Court of Common Pleas*, signed by John Symonds and 49 others, dated July 13, 1852, stating **“that the selectmen of said town of Marlow have been requested in writing to lay out said highway, but have neglected and refused to do so.”** Selectmen at the time were Gilman Jones, Samuel Bracket, and Dudley H. Lewis. Edmund Jones was Town Clerk.

The petition continues: **“It is ordered that the petitioners give notice to the town of Marlow to appear in the Court of Common Pleas.... in Keene.... on the second Tuesday of September next, and show cause if any they have why the prayer of such petition should not be granted.”**

Obviously the appeal worked. The road was built. It is now the section of Washington Pond Road from the Symondsville bridge to the Christmas Trees Inn on Route 10.


*Chapter 50 of the Revised Statutes of the State of New Hampshire passed December 23, 1842 described the powers of the Court of Common Pleas in relation to the laying out of highways.

Copy
Petition of John Symonds
& 49 others for a new highway
in Marlow

Charles J. B. Rice, filed &
order of notice issued
Aug 9, 1852
Attest. Thos. Bischo Clerk
A true copy
Attest. Thos. Bischo Clerk

We have received the sad news that Mary M. Blank passed away on April 28, 2023. In 1998 Mary and her husband Al purchased and restored a historic house on Marlow's Lower Main Street and they became two of Marlow's most active citizens. Our Historical Society was lucky to have Mary as a long time president and treasurer. Her commitment to the Society's mission, her foresight, her energy and enthusiasm, were incomparable. Even after her tenure, she was always eager to help her successors in any way possible. In more recent years Mary moved to Bellows Falls, the town where she was born, and which was very close to her heart.

We will remember Mary with fondness and gratitude.





Marlow Historical Society
Founded in 1976

President - vacant
Vice President - vacant
Secretary - Patty Little
Treasurer - Pat Strickland

Directors
Sharon Spalluto
Gary Levesque
Sharon Davis

Newsletter Co-Editors
Maria M. Baril
Stephanie Tickner

mhsnewhampshire@gmail.com

*www.marlownewhampshire.org/
marlow-historical-society.php*

PO Box 12, Marlow, NH 03456

Help preserve local history
for future generations.
Please consider including
the Marlow Historical
Society in your legacy
planning.



**Sons Of Union Veterans Of The Civil War
Banner Magazine - You've Been Published**

At the end of April, Stephanie Tickner received the following email from the NH SUVCW:

*For your information and sharing with the Marlow, NH Historical Society, I am notifying you that an article of your presentation to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Dept of NH has been published in their magazine, **THE BANNER**, VOLUME 127, NUMBER 3, The Journal of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War - Spring, 2023 on page 23.*

I thought that you and your colleagues would enjoy seeing this for all of your efforts that you put in by publishing the Civil War Journal of Corp Ezra G. Huntley.

God Bless America, Dick and Alna Stevens, Secretary, Camp #7, SUVCW

NEW HAMPSHIRE

On February 11, 2023 the Department observed Union Defenders Day in Concord with a presentation by Ms. Stephanie Tickner of the Marlow (NH) Historical Society. They researched and published the Diary of Ezra Huntley who served in the 18th NH Vol. It was quite a project as the handwritten script was at times hard to decipher, and Cpl. Huntley's spelling was unique. It was a wonderful presentation, with a good turnout. Photos from the event were provided by Br. Stevens.

