# MHS Newsletter

*Marlow Historical Society's Mission is to preserve and illuminate Marlow's History*

**Fall 2018**


**This month the Society features articles on the "Founders", those pioneering men and women who banded together to begin the ongoing journey to uncover and promote Marlow's wonderful history. Contributed by a collection of writers, we hope you will enjoy this look at those whose legacy we still honor today!**

## ALLAN W. PLUMB JR.

### First President of the Historical Society

Contributed by his grandson, Adam Allan Plumb

Allan Warren Plumb Jr. was born October 26, 1920 in Trumbull, Connecticut. His father, Allan Warren Plumb Sr. died young from a heart attack after shoveling a deep snowdrift, leaving Allan and his sister Jean alone with their mother Edna Couch Plumb.

He took an interest in the environment and anthropology at a young age, planning and managing an area of woodland for a project through the local 4H society. He also enjoyed finding and collecting Indian relics, which he did until his passing, even unearthing arrowheads in Marlow and Stoddard. From a young age he was heavily involved with the local Boy Scout Troop. When he was 16, he, his sister and mother moved to Washington, NH to be closer to his mother's family, who owned a farm there.

He attended Wanakena Ranger School in Wanakena, NY, and graduated in 1938 with a degree in Forestry. He soon thereafter moved back to New Hampshire where he worked as a forester for Watson and Williams and later Andorra Forest Products in Marlow and Stoddard. It was during his time working at the mills and in the woods near Marlow that he met my grandmother, Thelma (Young) Plumb, a native of Marlow. They became close before he was drafted into the US Army Air Corps in 1942. During his three years in the Service, he was stationed in North Africa, Greece, the Philippines and Italy, working with a team whose mission was to find and return to their respective countries allied soldiers killed in combat. He attained the rank of Sargent and received an honorable discharge in 1945.

Upon returning to the U.S. after WWII he married my grandmother, and soon moved to Newport NH, becoming a forester for Corbins Park, as well as cruising vast tracts of timberland for companies such as Draper Corp., Brown of Berlin and the Saunders family through the New England Forestry Foundation, where he remained until the late 1960s. It was during this time that he made working relationships with many local loggers, woodcutters and teamsters, including Fred Markham, whose mill stood at the site of the Perkins Elementary School, and John Perkins Sr., a mill hand of Markhams, and after whom the school is named. In the late 1960s he went on his own as a consulting forester, moving back to Marlow, still cruising lands for some of the biggest mills and lumber owners in New England.

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He enjoyed and practiced land surveying until his death. Many property maps in area town halls and records offices bear his name. In the late 1960s he would travel with a group of US Foresters to several European countries to study their methods of forestry and the reforestation of damaged woodlands. He would become president of the New Hampshire Foresters Association and Land Surveyors Association of New Hampshire, where he was instrumental in implementing the first licensing for land surveyors. He was instrumental in the implementation of the American Tree Farm System and was awarded the "Bronze Helmet" award for his help in putting some of the first tree farms into effect, paving the way for sustainable forestry and timber harvesting. He was also a member of the New Hampshire Land Owners Association, Timber Owners Association, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, and was a Deputy Forest Fire Ranger. He was a member of the Marlow Volunteer Fire Department and of the Odd Fellows Forest Lodge, and served as a Marlow Selectman.

It was while he was selectman and Marge Davis was tax collector, that the two of them brainstormed the beginnings of what would become the Marlow Historical Society. No doubt his interest in a historical society was fueled by his interest in Marlow and its first inhabitants - many of them his wife's ancestors - and by his meticulous nature when it came to recording information. Thanks to his interest in verbal and written history and his interest in collecting artifacts, the first Historical Society museum, located at the Methodist Chapel, was born, many of the artifacts on display being procured by him for the benefit of future generations. He died from a major heart attack on Labor Day 1979 while crossing Ashuelot Pond in a boat headed for his camp, with my grandmother at his side. He was 59 years old.

**The Five Founders of the Marlow Historical Society: l to r, Allan W. Plumb Jr., Marge Davis, Beatrice Andrews, Audrey Benson, and Arlene Rhoades**

## MARGE DAVIS

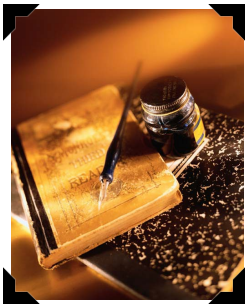
**(Contributed by her son Warren Davis)**

Margery Grace Davis was born to Frederick C. Cormack and Gertrude Hendricks, Brooklyn, NY, on April 4th, 1923, the second of two children. She was raised by an aunt (all her life she only referred to her as "Auntie"), of whom she would become primary caregiver from 1949-1953. Margery moved to Marlow around 1953 much without the support of family or friends, buying a house on Forest Road (now 190 Forest Road). During that time she worked as a computer programmer for Peerless Insurance Company. She married Richard M. Davis Sr. in 1958 and gave birth to four children: Anthony L. Davis (Tony), Richard M. Davis Jr. (Rick), Tracey L. Kiekenapp, and Warren A. Davis.

She began her service to the town of Marlow in 1966 when she became Town Clerk and Tax Collector, operating out of the family home until the current location opened. With the passing of her husband (1973) and to support four growing children, she took work driving the Marlow school bus; and during the summer months coordinating family efforts with the Town's Cemetery care. She was instrumental in the restoration of toppled or broken headstones, mapping the plots in the village cemetery, as well as the restoration of the neglected Jay Allen Cemetery. As Marlow Town Clerk, on Town Meeting Day it would not be unusual for her to bellow from the clerk's table to some long winded complainant to "shut up and sit down" overstepping the Moderator's responsibility. As Tax Collector, to many, she had an authoritarian demeanor when it came to paying your obligations,… yet always having the best interest of the town at heart. Through her later years she demonstrated compassion, providing caring support to those close to her who required transportation and company.

She volunteered her keen accounting abilities as treasurer for Camp Holiday Summer Program (summer rehabilitation retreat for children with disabilities). Also, leveraging her knowledge of the town's residents, she held a position as Marlow's Postal Clerk learning more about the happenings in town and the patrons' daily habits. Once fully retired, to satisfy her curiosity, she would drive the local roads daily keeping up with what was being done and where… and if not satisfied, would make extended trips (Georgia) for no other reason than to "see what was going on". All her life she had a strong interest in family and Marlow history. In fact, she knew more about her late husband's ancestry (researching and creating a family tree) than about her own. When able, it was not uncommon for her to wander the woods of Marlow in search of historical artifacts, "towing" family and friends along for the experience. This interest and curiosity was surely the seed of her contribution as a founding member of Marlow's Historical Society in 1976.

This is in remembrance of Margery Grace Davis, now deceased, December 31, 2003 (45 years to the day of her only marriage), survived by her 4 children, 4 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren. She was no stranger to hardship or difficult times having been raised in a broken family and losing her husband in the early years of starting her own. Some may remember her as "independent", "authoritarian, "strong willed" - all for the right reasons; and "compassionate" and "curious" as well. It was her strong disposition, independence, and love of the community she called home that allowed her to persevere and give back, and to leave a lasting legacy… which is carried on to this day by her family members' involvement in the Marlow community.



### TINY TREASURES FROM THE PAST

**Mary A. Phelps' diary for the year 1874 is only 2 1/2" x 4"** The little leather-bound book was a gift from Elton W. Towne. Mary was born in 1857, the daughter of George Phelps and Mary Applin. Mary expected to marry Elton Towne on September 30, 1874. In her diary she writes about her happiness when Elton came to visit; about making a scarf for him, about him returning from a trip to Boston, etc. Tragically, he became ill and died in June of that year. The entry for Wednesday June 10 reads: **" Elton was buried today at one o'clock. Oh dear, how lonesome it is without my Elton."** Entries thereafter show a young woman's grief, while still carrying on with day-to-day life.

Mary later married Frank Gilman in 1895 and moved to Medford MA. She and Frank adopted Audrey Richards born Dec. 26, 1903. Audrey and her husband Cecil Benson summered in Marlow, before moving to town permanently. They lived in the house where Mary was born and raised.
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****See "The Phelps of Marlow" in our Spring/Summer 2018 newsletter.*

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### Greene's Landing - where is it.... and why the name?

Greene's Landing is on the Ashuelot River just before you cross the Marlow town line into Gilsum - very near Lewis Road where the "Cheshire Earth" sign is.

As to its name, Alan Rumrill, director of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, says he might have solved the mystery, although he says it's impossible to be 100% certain:

Elmore and Lydia Green(e) lived there, just across the river, by the mid1870s. Elmore was a farmer, but Elgin Jones seems to suggest that he also owned the mill there on the river at one time. Elmore died by the middle 1890s, but Lydia lived there until after 1900. When the mill dam was there in the 1800s, however, that area of flat, open water may have been even larger as more water was held back by the dam. That would have been the southern end of the open water as the rapids began just below the dam site. It makes sense that Green's land would have been used as a landing for people boating on the river. Hence you get "Greene's Landing". (Perhaps they even rented boats, which many locals did for a little extra income").

## AUDREY M. BENSON

From her memoirs, newspaper articles and information contributed by Tracy Messer and Chuck Mosher

Audrey Mae Benson was born in Boston, MA on Dec. 26, 1903. She was the adopted daughter of Frank Gilman and Mary (Phelps) Gilman. Mary was the daughter of George Phelps and Mary Jane (Applin) Phelps of Marlow.

Audrey was an accomplished dancer and dance instructor. Her memoir entitled "My Career", which is in our archives, details how she went from being a child prodigy in many types of dance including ballet, to becoming a teacher from the age of fourteen.
Her mother, she writes, was "always there, never forceful, enjoying what I was enjoying, probably thinking she was living her life through me". When she decided to teach rather than perform, she writes "My father made me a sign to put on the house: 'Gilman School of Dance'".

As teaching became her profession, she joined Dance Teachers Clubs in Boston, Hartford and New York City, and held classes in Woburn, Winchester, Belmont, and Bridgwater, MA; and in Keene, NH.

She married Cecil Benson in 1942, and continued to teach for twenty more years. Upon their retirement they moved to Marlow to live in the same house where Audrey's mother Mary had been born and raised, now 24 Cross St.

Audrey loved the town of Marlow, becoming an active member of the community, playing the organ at church, and organizing shows for Old Home Days and other occasions. Carol Pacetti, Beatrice Andrews' daughter, fondly remembers being one of Audrey's dancers on Old Home Days.

A program from a Flood Relief Benefit Show that took place at Keene High School on Aug. 31, 1955, reads: "Dances conceived and staged by Audrey Benson." Chuck Mosher remarks that "her small stature gave no hint of the enthusiasm, determination and energy that churned inside."

Among her valuable contributions to future generations is a scrapbook of Marlow memories from the early years to the 1980's and which she donated to the Marlow Library. Loisanne Foster made a copy by scanning all the pictures, and it is available for viewing at our museum in Murray Hall.

She died in Westmoreland NH, on March 28, 2000.

## THE OLD FIRE PUMPER

The old fire pumper now housed in the Hearse House and used only in parades, was the second of its kind owned by the Marlow Fire Dept., and dates from 1913. It played an important role in the fire of 1916. The addition of sulphuric acid and baking soda to water in the tank created gas which pressurized the tank, and forced the water through 50' of hose. In the fire of 1916, when seven or eight buildings were destroyed, the supply of baking soda was used up. Someone was sent to Gilsum to buy all that was available. Imagine the firemen's surprise when the buyer returned with all possible speed, and with all the soda to be found in Gilsum - but he had bought SODA POP.

## BEATRICE ANDREWS

Contributed by her daughter, Carol Pacetti

Beatrice Andrews was born January 9, 1921 in Langdon, NH, the middle of seven children of Elmer and Maude Barlow Davis. Her father was a steeplejack. A child of the depression, she often spoke of making clothes from flour sacks and a silky blouse from an old coat lining. She came to Marlow when she married Charles Andrews Jr. in 1939. They had three children: Carol, Kathleen and Charles Andrews III. Devoted to her family, she worked hard to create a nice home. She made most of the clothes we wore to school and church. The flower gardens were also very important to her.

She thought Marlow was a a beautiful town, and would say so every time we reached the area of Greene's Landing** on Rt. 10 when coming back from Keene. At that time all three Marlow steeples were clearly visible and made a beautiful picture looking up the Ashuelot River.

Always a supporter of Marlow institutions, she studied very hard and was proud to attain Noble Grand status in the Rebekahs. She was also a member of the Excelsior Grange, the Marlow Methodist Church, the PTA and the school board, and was a Girl Scout leader.

A strong and industrious woman, she worked in the woolen mills in Newport as a drawing in girl, and had a lot of respect for the more skilled workers such as weavers. She enjoyed visiting other kinds of old mills and learning about their effect on society. Later on she worked at the Fuller Machine Shop in East Alstead along with her husband. After retirement she was one of the few women who went to the Nautilus in Keene to exercise.

She succumbed to ALS on March 31, 1991.

## MARGARET ARLENE RHOADES

Contributed by her husband Robert Rhoades, and her cousin Chuck Mosher

Margaret Arlene Rhoades, daughter of Clarence Mosher and Edna (Strickland) Mosher, was born March 25, 1929. She had one sister, Althea. Arlene grew up and lived in Marlow her entire life, attending the Marlow and Vilas schools. She married Robert on June 9, 1948, and they raised five daughters: Bobbie, Pixie, Dennie, Judy, and Debbie, in a loving home. On April 18, 1954 Arlene joined the Marlow Methodist Church, and served as church organist for twenty years. She was the first woman to serve on the Marlow Select Board. She was also town librarian, school board member and trustee of the trust funds.

Arlene was the Mosher family historian, and before the advent of computers spent countless hours reading documents both in New Hampshire and Nova Scotia. Chuck Mosher pays eloquent homage to her; he writes: "Arlene's enthusiasm was expressed quietly and through hard work. The work ethic made her an invaluable member of any new venture. She loved the process of research and was taken from us much too early." Arlene passed away in March 1996.

**Marlow Historical Society**
**2017-2018**

**Officers:**

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| ***President*:** | **Maria Baril** |
| ***Vice President*:** | **Barry Corriveau** |
| ***Treasurer:*** | **Pat Strickland** |
| ***Secretary:*** | **Patty Little** |

**Directors:**
**Joe Baril**
**Edward Thomas**
**Joanne Thomas**

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Dear members and friends:

You'll be glad to hear that we have no reports this time about crumbling roof shingles, or any other impending catastrophes. Half of the Murray Hall roof - the part seriously at risk - was done last December, and the other half is still in good condition.

This has been a good summer, and we have nothing but good news. The grand opening of our Murray Hall museum on July 1 was a great success despite the fact that we wilted a little from the heat. Visitors expressed their admiration for the work done, and enjoyed a splendid buffet. We thank all the Marlow cooks who contributed.

The museum will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to noon, on the third Sunday of the month - to coincide with the Odd Fellows' breakfast - from May to October. A new wheelchair accessible porta-potty will soon be installed behind the hall.

To enhance our collection, we have on display an outstanding array of Odd Fellows paraphernalia on temporary loan from our neighbors at Forest Lodge. A second exhibit, ***"Marlow Voices from the Past"***, features vintage Marlow post cards, with wistful messages from days gone by. Director Ed Thomas created the exhibit. We are thankful that Ed and Joanne, despite the fact that they no longer live in Marlow, have remained involved in the Society. Joanne is responsible for formatting our newsletters, and Ed is our "Man For All Seasons."

We scheduled two Humanities Council programs at Jones Hall. On July 15, Steve Taylor's gave a presentation entitled ***Poor Houses and Town Farms: The Hard Row for Paupers***, which dealt with New Hampshire's struggle with issues concerning treatment of its poor. On September 23 Jo Radner will speak about ***Yankee Ingenuity, Stories of Headstrong and Resourceful People*,** which, according to the Humanities To Go catalog, is a series of "historical tales - humorous and thought-provoking - about New Englanders who have used their wits in extraordinary ways to solve problems and create inventions."

Perhaps the best news this year is that we are finally ready to start inventorying and cataloguing our collection. We now own a computer, external hard drive, printer, etc., and have contracted with an expert who will start the job and gradually train one of us to record the data, so that, as he puts it: "the Society can assume ownership of the project at some point."

Finances are always an intimidating subject. Membership dues and donations are our main source of income, and are adequate in the normal course of events. For extraordinary expenses and emergencies we need to look for additional revenue. We were able to qualify for the N.H. Charitable Gaming: the state of New Hampshire allows casinos, provided that charitable organizations receive 35% of the nightly profits after all prizes have been awarded to players. Each organization is assigned 10 days during the year. That money has rescued us from insolvency a couple of times! This year we are also applying for a grant from the Mascoma Savings Bank of Keene.

So, as you can see, we are very busy. And ... there are only seven of us - four officers and three directors. We need help and would like more of you to get involved: chairing committees, hosting at the museum, writing newsletter articles, and in so many other ways! Please come to one of our board meetings (second Tuesday of the month) and volunteer.

Wishing you all the best,
Maria