

MHS Newsletter

The Marlow Historical Society, Marlow, NH, 03456
P.O. Box 12, Marlow, NH 03456

Winter 2013

Edgewood Park

Following the old Forest Road toward Alstead, beyond the Town Pound, is rocky woodland on the left side of the road, located about half a mile from the center of Marlow village. There, a path leads down to a balancing rock along the shore of a beaver pond at the foot of Mack Mountain. Most passersby today would be surprised to learn that this was the site of a late 19th century botanical garden known as "Edgewood Park."

As early as Independence Day, 1883, picnics and outings took place at Edgewood Park, a grove originally owned by John Quincy Jones. At first, there was just a bandstand on site to accommodate the Marlow Cornet Band and occasional speakers. Fireworks were always a favorite on the "Glorious Fourth" and people could purchase lemonade and ice cream to go along with the dinners they brought. (*continued, pg. 2*)



Marlow History Tour

On a crisp morning on November 2nd, all 39 excited Perkins School pupils, their teachers, and principal Phyllis Peterson, boarded a yellow bus with Loisanne Foster as their tour guide. History became more real for these students as they explored several of Marlow's historic places. They bubbled with questions and comments.

After a brief stop at the town pound, we visited the Old Settlers' Cemetery on Sargent Road with its mysterious quartz rock near the entry, unmarked graves, and nineteenth century memorial to our first citizens. Then we took Newell Pond Road to Baker's Corner where Marlow's first settlers had built their village. They had come from Lyme CT up the Connecticut River to Walpole where they purchased oxen and carts from Benjamin Bellows for the last leg of the journey through Alstead and up Old Settlers' Road. The Solomon Gee family emptied their cart and turned it over to shelter under it the first night and built their home on the spot where Martha (Bingham) Gee saw first Marlow light. Only cellar holes remain today, but the students were surprised to learn that the area had later been used as a private airport.

We made many other stops. At Gustin Pond, the students learned about the early proprietor, Samuel Gustin, who saved Marlow by riding to Portsmouth (then our capital), in January of 1772, with a petition to extend the charter which Governor Wentworth had threatened to terminate because the agreed upon amount of land had not been cleared. Bear in mind that there were, at best, only bridle paths through the wilderness to Portsmouth then.

(*continued, pg. 4*)



This is a photo taken at Edgewood Park in 1898. Seated left to right in the back row are: Harlan Honey, Waldo Perkins, George Gee, Perley Fox, Rockwell Craig, Elbridge Phelps, and Maurice Washburn. Front row: Sara Jones, Lucy Davis, Elgin Jones, Horace Gee, Quincy Jones, Sara Phelps, Leander Huntley, Willard Fletcher. These were the members of the Old Home Committee for that year.

By fall of 1888, seating for nearly 300 people had been laid out to accommodate camp meetings sponsored by the Methodist Church. Marlow's Excelsior grange and those from neighboring towns frequently patronized the grove. Dinner tables, a cook stove and well, swings, and croquet grounds were added over the years. In 1890 a pond was created for rowboats. A more complete description of the grounds appeared in the September 12, 1891 edition of the Keene Evening Sentinel:

Not the least among the attractions of the place is Edgewood, a pretty little picnic Grove on the Alstead road, about a half a mile from the village. Through the public spirit of the owner of the land, Mr. J.Q.Jones, the ground has been cleared of its undergrowth, hard driveways have been built up, swings hung and croquet ground smoothed off. A platform for speaking has been in place for many years; also a pump which furnishes good water, houses for lunching, a cooking house and ice cream stand. More recently a fine preacher's house and good seats have been provided for camp meetings and for a few years such meetings have been held each fall under the direction of the pastor of the Methodist church.

Mr. Jones is constantly working to make the grove still more attractive. He has built a dam across a stream flowing through the land and now has a pretty little lake with several boats to still further delight the young people. A winding path through the trees in full view of the lake, over little knolls and across rustic bridges, leads to a lovely spot where a pretty waterfall and a profusion of flowers and climbing vines remind one of similar spots in Central Park and other places of like cultivation. Passing through this garden of loveliness is a true lover's walk, without which all this attractiveness would be incomplete – to the lovers.

The approximate location of Edgewood Park appears on the 1892 town map. In late August of 1893, J.Q. Jones counted 200 dahlia blossoms in his garden at Edgewood. Marlow was one of the first towns in the state to celebrate "Old Home Day." The tradition began in 1899 by proclamation of Governor Rollins in an attempt to stem the tide of migration from the farms to the cities. Former residents were invited to return to town to renew associations with old friends and familiar places. Whenever weather permitted, Old Home Day exercises took place at Edgewood Park which welcomed approximately 700 people to its grounds that first year. The place continued to be the preferred site for Old Home Day celebrations as noted in the August 24, 1903 edition of the Keene Evening Sentinel:

Had the day been pleasant the committee had arranged to celebrate at Edgewood park, a charming spot, not more than a half a mile from the village centre, which by the public spirit and generosity of one of its chief citizens, John Quincy Jones, has been made into a village park sufficiently large to accommodate any public gathering that may enter its boundaries. Evidently, Mr. Jones, who has for many years employed his leisure hours in clearing, reconstructing, and beautifying this natural park, as been inspired and prompted by sentiment and a taste for the beautiful, as one section of the park is a veritable flower garden with a large variety, composing selections that would indicate that the proprietor was a person skilled in flower culture and who was not a stranger to the very desirable quality of man's higher nature that is dominated esthetics.

The flower section of the park is flanked on one side by an artificial lake or pond, the elevation of which has been made to endow the garden of flowers, and within the enclosed is a twin waterfall, the music of which can be heard from all sections of the park. Besides the waterfalls aforementioned the stream or rivulet has been made to traverse the flower grounds around and through its limits so that the visitors can at all times gratify their tastes for the music of the running waters. Moreover, to make easy and convenient the walk of visitors, avenues and bridges have been constructed. Indeed the park with its buildings and embellishments is well worth a journey to behold, not counting the many other attractions that Marlow can justly claim.

John Quincy Jones died April 8, 1909, at age 92. Upon his death, Edgewood Park was passed to his son, Elgin Alonzo Jones, Marlow's preeminent historian. It appears that after J. Q. Jones' death, Edgewood Park was no longer maintained and Old Home Day celebrations became sporadic. The area was devastated by the Hurricane of '38 and the '41 Forest Fire. Upon Elgin Jones's death, December 20, 1940, the 20 acre Edgewood Park was sold to a succession of timber and real estate companies. Having rediscovered Edgewood Park, Patricia Gallup purchased the property as part of a 149.2 acre parcel owned by Leeward Holdings, a West Indies corporation. Her intent was to preserve Edgewood Park by subdividing the 20 acre parcel and donating it to the Marlow Historical Society with the hope that it might one day be restored.

Tracy Messer

Mark your Calendars Now!! Jones Hall February 23 at 7p.m.
 "Grandma and Grandpa's Parlor Music"...a piano concert featuring Tristan Smith. Tristan will interpret popular music of the turn-of-the 19th century enjoyed right here in Marlow. This is a free concert; refreshments will be served.



Fred Hill makes merry at the piano for the annual Marlow Christmas program on Saturday, December 1

On December 1, the Marlow Historical Society and the Town of Marlow joined forces to bring the rollicking piano music of Fred Hill to entertain young and old at Jones Hall. We heard a wide range of Christmas music Silent Night to Jingle Bells.....and the Hall reverberated with happy voices and stomping feet.

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Marlow Genealogy Notes:

Bayard Stafford Huntley

Last year we at MHS were fortunate to receive a tape of humorous stories about early 20th century Marlow characters recorded by Bayard Huntley who grew up here, and like many Marlow residents, went forth to succeed in the outside world. The tape, made several decades ago, was sent by a nephew by marriage who wondered if we would like it. Would we! It was just in time to enliven our opening 250th birthday celebration, "Marlow Stories." Mr. Huntley's infectious chuckle and his comic take on Marlow characters made the tape a hit. It has since been recorded digitally "for all time." Bayard Huntley was certainly one of those Marlow characters himself.

We began to wonder about him. Here is what Huntley genealogist, Virgil Huntley, has to say about him: "He was 6ft., 5 inches tall, had no children of his own but did have a step daughter. His father was a Selectman and road master of Marlow and his mother was the Marlow correspondent for the Keene, NH Sentinel for more than fifty years." Virgil also added that, at age 75, he earned a pilot's license. It was on his 75th birthday. That sort of daring-do has been a Huntley tradition back to the time of Marlow's 1767 settler, Nathan Huntley, and his father, Aaron, from Lyme, CT.

Bayard Stafford Huntley was born in Marlow on September 22, 1908 and died in Pittsfield, MA September 16, 1993, age 84, we learn from the website "findagrave.com" "He is the son of Roy (1881 - 1954) of Marlow and Anna Curran Huntley (1880-1973) of Montraeal, a 1926 graduate of Keene High School and later a graduate of Bentley School of Accounting and Finance. A WWII Army veteran, he received the Good Conduct medal and the American Defense Service Medal." We learn that from 1961 until his retirement in 1973, he was the assistant treasurer and assistant vice president of the Berkshire County Savings Bank in Pittsfield, MA. He was an active member of the Pittsfield community, serving as treasurer of several organizations and a member of the local country club. From 1956-1958 he was president of the national Huntley Association.

Robert Nichols tells us, "In the 1950's I remember his mother Annie. She lived in the large house diagonally across the street to the left from wher the Historical Society is now. She was already a widow by then. She was a tall, slightly thin woman with greying hair. A pleasant person -- not one that children were afraid of... His grandfather was a half brother to the Mary Ann Huntley whose name was found in some clothes that were given to the Society." His wife, (Alice) Dorothy Alden Henry Huntley (1907- 1994), was a well-known artist in oils with exhibits in the Pittsfield, MA area. Nancy Ferretti is his step-daughter or daughter -of-the-heart. Despite his long, active life in Pittsfield, MA, clearly his heart was in Marlow memories. He and his wife are buried here in the home of his ancestors, at the Marlow Village Cemetery.

Loisanne Foster



On November 26th some of the children who donated funds for the new fence along Tinshop Pond unveiled the new donors' plaque. Thanks again to one and all who contributedgg!!

(Tour Continued from pg. 1)

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At West Yard Cemetery on Jay Allen Road, students read inscriptions on ancient graves and some were excited to find their own ancestors' gravestones there.

We explored the Old Marlow Common on Marlow Hill, first location of the meeting house, now Jones Hall in the present village. We got our bearings on the cellar hole of a home built by Marlow settler and wealthy land owner, Nathan Huntley whose descendants live in Marlow today.

Back on Forest Road, we noted the location of Edgewood Park which, until the Hurricane of 1938 wiped out the dam, featured boating and swimming at Mack Pond, picnic tables, a board walk, and a pavilion where bands played on special occasions. Here Mrs. Foster changed from her colonial cap to a broad brimmed hat more stylish in the late 19th century. Students were curious about Alice Britton, Marlow's lady stagecoach driver who lived in the Parker home, now owned by Ernest and Simone Perry. Her route took her from Marlow to Concord to Keene and back to Marlow in all weather. What a brave woman!

We looked at the breached dam where Cross Street and Church St. meet and talked about the mill where the Phelps family made hay rakes and furniture. We mentioned the existing old houses, built by John Giffin and Abisha Tubbs, on Baine Road and spoke of our first settler, Mr. Tubbs' brother-in-law, Solomon Mack and his adventures in the French and Indian War, in the ginseng trade, as a privateer, and the man who taught the fathers of New England towns to make salt peter (used in gun powder) just before the Revolution.

Then we made the most favorite stop of all: to see the old horse-drawn hearse. We noted the runners which replaced wheels in the winter. We also studied the 1910 hand-pulled water pumper kept in the hearse house. Powered by a mixture of sulfuric acid and baking soda, it could shoot a stream of water 40 feet in the air. By then, we had time for only a too-short stop in the village with gestures toward Jones Hall, moved from Marlow Hill, and other buildings including industry related ones such as the James Burnap mill (now housing Audio Accessories), the original Burnap house, and the present Christmas Trees Inn, built for Bethuel Farley who produced ink and flavorings using Stoddard glass bottles. Last of all, we enjoyed a short visit to the museum which features products of Phelps manufacture and daily life. The silver dog collar won the prize for the oddest exhibit!

The students were attentive, respectful, and enormously curious; time was too short to show and tell all about Marlow history. Our hope as a Society is that, by conducting these tours, we will help forge a generation that will protect and respect our historic heritage. These Marlow youngsters showed that our hope is well-founded.

Loisanne Foster

Marlow Historical Society

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