

Marlow Newsletter

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

Fall 2016

The Gees Come to Town

In 1767 one of our first settlers, Solomon Gee, came from Lyme, Connecticut with his wife Martha, and children Leuman, Molly and Abner. After a long trip up the Connecticut River to Walpole, and then a hard trek over the hills, they reached their land in Marlow one evening after dark. They spent that first night under the shelter of their overturned cart. Most of us are familiar with the narrative. Our Loisanne Foster wrote a play about it, and it was performed by the children of the John D. Perkins Sr. Academy.

Solomon built Marlow's first mill and the Gees established a lasting presence in Marlow. Solomon, Stephen, Elisha, Horace, George... five generations farmed the land, and worked the mill, located in the intersection of Route 10 and Sand Pond Rd. George was the last of the family to own it, having sold it to a Massachusetts firm around 1910. He and his wife Edith moved to the village and ran a tourist lodge in the house now owned by Art and Mary Andreasen, which is shown in the photo below.

Through the years many Gee descendants have visited Marlow. Whenever we learn they'll be coming, we like to roll out the red carpet. Last year, Bill and Cathy Gee came from Michigan to visit the graves of Bill's ancestors in the West Yard Cemetery. This spring, as mentioned in our last newsletter, we welcomed Melanie Mercier, whose grandmother, Ruth Gee, was George's daughter. She gave the Society a copy of Ruth's "Memories", recorded and transcribed by Melanie and her sister. (continued, Page Two)



SCHOOL STARTS — Construction of the new Marlow elementary school begins Saturday with groundbreaking. From left are Francis Pockett, school board member; Kate Perkins, donor of land for the school; John Menton, assistant school superintendent; Stanley B. Tufts Fall Mountain Regional superintendent, and John Perkins Jr. (Sentinel Photo-Ferriter)

This article about an esteemed Marlow citizen for whom the Marlow school is named, and includes the recollections of his grandchildren Marie Freeman and Bobby Perkins, which bear witness to the love and respect they felt for him.

John Dewey Perkins, Sr.

John Dewey Perkins Sr. was born May 1, 1898 in Greenwich, Rhode Island, to John Palmer Perkins and Florence Alma Harrington, of English descent. He had an older sister, Annie Clara Perkins, born in 1897.

His father died when he was 3 months old. His mother remarried when he was 6 years old to David Olney Knight, and they moved to Marlboro NH. Three half brothers completed the family: Ernie and Everett (twins) and David Knight. They lived in Acworth running a sawmill and gas station.

He married Catherine Cheplick on October 23, 1921. Catherine's family operated a dairy farm in Alstead. They had two sons: John D. Jr., and Walter Frank, and lived in Marlow in the little red house on Route 10, just north of the State Barn.

The house had electricity and a well pump for water in the kitchen, and toilet facilities in the barn. Marie recalls that they kept a couple of heads of cattle, chickens, dogs, cats, and their grandchildren's pet critters, including a goat, hedgehog, rabbits, and woodchucks. The land where the Marlow school is now located used to be "the farm". Mr. Perkins was also extremely proud of his vegetable garden; and he owned a John Deere tractor that he kept on a knoll in order to give it a rolling start. (continued, Page Three)



(Continued from Page One)

A few days later we received a letter from Mr. Dean Safford, (Ruth Gee's son; Melanie's father). Mr. Safford is 94, and he reminisced about the Marlow of his youth.

"My grandparents ran Gee's Tourist Lodge in Marlow. They were one of the few who had running water and electricity; the lights went out at midnight when the saw mill closed."

{A Keene Evening Sentinel clipping dated July 5, 1910 reports: "The plumbers are expected from Antrim to plumb the bath room and do other necessary work at George F. Gee's new house. Lewis Hatch and Herbert Flagg doing the work. He is also going to have electric lights installed there, we understand."}

"I played with the Davis children. Dick {father of Tony and Rick Davis} would deliver the Keene newspaper and I would walk around with him. They had an ice house; we played in it to keep cool."

Some people had a Model T Ford they would jack up and put a pulley on the rear wheel to run a circular saw to cut their firewood."

There were three stores in town: Fiske, Nichols and Strickland. Also a hotel. We had summer school in the Grange Hall and sang on the 1st day of May. We brought May baskets to our friends"

Mrs. Mercier also gave us a copy of a 1901 letter written to Iva Gee (Ruth's half sister) by one of her cousins. There's a poignant story in the letter about little Abner Gee, Solomon's son. It goes like this:

"The last time I was in Marlow your grandfather Gee and your father joined me in a search for records among the head stones in the 'Old Grave Yard' in the west end of town . Among the first stones we found was one nearly covered by (an) accumulation of over a century. In the right hand corner below the year, was Gee. Curiosity led your father to lift the stone out of its pocket of earth, and after scraping the moss from the rude inscription, he found the following: 'Abner Gee died September 12, 1777, age 12 years 2 months.' This was the earliest record we found, and marked the grave of the child born in Lyme, Conn. to Solomon Gee and his wife Martha. Ten years before this lad spent his first night in Marlow - a child of two years cuddled up to his mother, under an overturned cart."



DID YOU KNOW....

That the first female County Register of Probate in the Whole United States was Marlow's Ella Fannie Gee?

She was born in 1853 in Fitchburg MA., daughter of Elbridge Gee, who was the great grandson of Solomon Gee, one of our first settlers. Elbridge Gee was a clothier, and he and his family travelled widely, until they finally returned to Marlow where Ella Fannie attended the Marlow Academy.

In 1920 she was elected Register of Probate for Cheshire County, after 40 years as a clerk at that agency, and held the job for 17 years, until her death in 1937. When she died, her sister Eliza, who had been her assistant for 12 years, was named to serve the remainder of the term.

Janice Brown, who publishes a blog about New Hampshire history, has written an excellent biography of Ella Fannie. It is located at: <http://www.cowhampshireblog.com/2015/01/08/first-female-county-register-of-probate-in-the-u-s-marlow-new-hampshires-ella-f-gee-1853-1937/>

Both John and Catherine enjoyed hunting and fishing; in fact, everybody called the wet land just north of the Baril property on Route 10 “Katie’s Bog”.

John was a big man, 6’2” or so, broad shouldered, with large hands and warm blue eyes. He was rejected from the military in WWI because of flat feet, and it was a sore point in his life that he was not able to serve his country. He was very proud that both his sons did serve: John in the Army, and Walter in the Navy.

There was nothing that Marie and Bobby liked better than spending time with their grandpa, whom everybody called Pop. He was very soft spoken, never raising his voice or cursing; but Bobby recalls that although he never lost his temper, you knew just by the way he looked at you when you had gone too far. Once he sat Bobby down and told him that “when hunting becomes a job or an obsession it is no longer fun”, and it is a lesson he has never forgotten. Another time, when Bobby was helping him do some shingling, he said: “since you worked like a man, you will be paid like a man”.

John worked in sawmills and lumbering most of his life, much of that for the Markems; and, according to Ronnie Gorges, he could keep a tally of the board-foot cut at the sawmill each day, all in his head, without jotting anything down. He lost a finger working at the Marlow Mill, which was located where Audio Accessories is today. In the 50s he worked at a sawmill located in his own land, where the school sits today. It was run by Freddie Markem, who, Bobby remembers, looked upon Mr. Perkins as a father figure. He also did road work with Stanley Sanders for the CRA.

John and Catherine were opposed to smoking and drinking alcohol, although on hot summer days, when helping with haying, they were known to have a beer.*** Catherine attended church every Sunday and believed strongly in helping their neighbors. They visited family, traveling to Rhode Island and Nova Scotia many times.

After retiring, John built a cap for his pickup truck and set off to Florida for the winters, with two dogs in cages in the back, and granddaughter Marie riding along. They purchased property in Zephyrhills where he built a house, and wintered there several years until the drive got to be too much.

John passed away on December 9, 1970 after a battle with cancer. Catherine lived until 1974 with family, and, after she had a stroke, in a nursing home. They are buried in Marlow’s Village Cemetery.

In 1973 ten acres of land on the west side of Route 10, were donated to the town of Marlow for the construction of a school “in loving memory of John Dewey Perkins, Sr., by his family: Catherine E. Perkins, John D. Perkins, Jr., and Walter F. Perkins.” The school was dedicated on February 8, 1974.

*** For anecdotes about the Cheplicks, read “When It’s Haying Time in N.H.” by Joseph Feuer, in our Autumn 2014 newsletter.

DID YOU KNOW.....

That the humble little swap shed at the recycling center has served the community in different forms for many decades?



It was first owned by Fred Huntley, who lived on Lewis Road, in the house where Vic Ireno now lives. Charlie Strickland tells us that Mr. Huntley raised milk cows and he used the shed to store his milk, cream separator and other dairy equipment.

During World War II it was moved to the village, behind Jones Hall, where it became a U.S. Air Force Ground Observation Post, manned by local volunteers.

In the 60s it was headquarters for the Boy Scouts: Troop 300, and in the 70s and 80s Pack 303, and then Troop 303.**

Finally in 1989, when the town recycling center opened, the shed was moved by Don Landroche and Joe Baril to its present location, and has become what local wits call “Bucky’s Boutique” Above photo Left to right:Back: Mattt Bissell, Ricky Corliss, John Lydon, Tim Strickland, Mark Bissell, Jim Strickland Front: Mark Gutkowski, Cliff Chambers, Steve Gutkowski, Chris Corliss.





Marlow Historical Society
2014-2015
Officers:

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DID YOU EVER WONDER.....

..... about the little white cabin in the woods, across from the Post Office? Although it's uninhabited and quite run-down, it has an official number now: 829 NH Route 10.

People decades ago used to call it "Perley's Place". It was the home of John Perley Winham, who was born in Marlow on August 9, 1883, son of Rufus Winham and his second wife Jennie Albro Carnes. He had a brother, Albert or Alberton. His mother died of TB when she was only 30 years old.

Perley never married, and lived alone. He is remembered by all as a very hard worker. He had horses and a team of oxen, and was employed by Andorra Forest Products, who built the little house for him to have a place to live. He also "pulled logs" for Clarence Mosher, who was his second cousin. (Rufus Winham was the brother of Curtis Winham, and Clarence Mosher was Curtis Winham's grandson). Donald Winham remembers Perley coming by his father's store and getting beer and doing odd jobs for a small amount of money. The 1940 census shows Perley living with his brother Alberton on Route 10.

John Perley Winham died in 1955 and is buried in the Marlow Village Cemetery. The gravestone has the names of his father Rufus, Rufus' first wife Emma Carpenter, John Perley, and Alberton. We don't know where Jennie Albro Carnes is buried; it could very well be in the same plot.

Mr. John D. Perkins Sr. and his wife Catherine owned the house after Perley passed away. Their granddaughter Marie remembers that she and her grandma would go to the cabin for a girls night every now and then.

We thank Charlie Strickland, Bob Rhoades, Marie Freeman, and Donna Winham for all the information; and to Donna and Tracy Messer for the photos