

MHS Newsletter

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

Fall 2019

History of Our Town Library

by M. Baril

A compilation of excerpts from the Marlow Library Trustees town reports 1889-2010, painstakingly put together by Historical Society member Johanna Kent, was the inspiration and chief resource for this article, which covers the history of the library up to the year 2001. Charlie Strickland's first-hand recollections enrich the narrative; and Tracy Messer provided important details about the 1920 and 1923 fires.

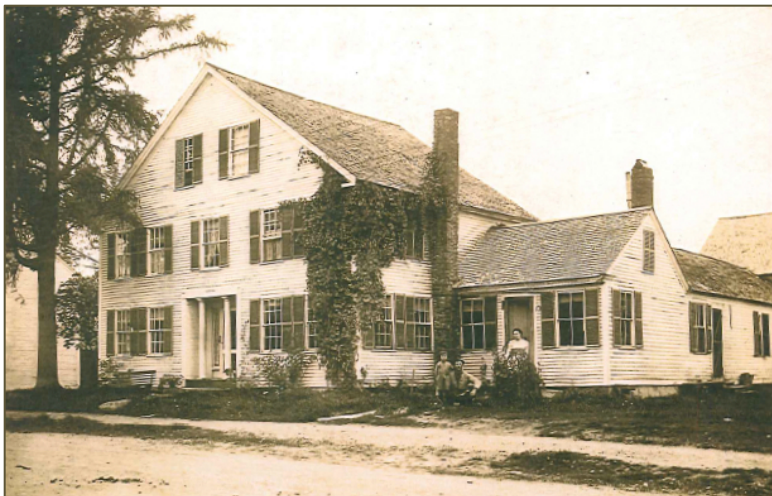
On March 8, 1874, five prominent Marlow citizens - Hosea Towne, Arthur E. Joslin, James M. Perkins, Mrs. George A. Messer, and Mrs. George W. Clyde - framed a constitution for the establishment of a town library. The constitution was duly approved and the Marlow Library Association was born. Officers were Ezra G. Huntley, James M. Perkins, Will G. Booth, and George W. Clyde. The Executive Committee consisted of Elgin A. Jones, Hosea Towne, Edward A. Fox, George W. Clyde, and Rev. Albert Baxter.

The minutes of the March 14, 1878 of the association read: *"Library opened April 28, 1877, having 59 books and 39 members. There have been 9 books added since, and 8 members."* The group contracted with Elbridge N. Howe to furnish room and care for the books at his pharmacy for \$2.00 a month. It made perfect sense to our town fathers, lacking a library building, to make the books accessible by placing them in a commercial establishment, open during regular business hours. The number of volumes gradually grew: 462 in 1889, 663 in 1891.

Elgin Jones, who once wrote: *"What is a public library but a school from which none may ever graduate,"* strongly advocated for the growth and enrichment of the town library. In 1892 he wrote: *"We have heard it whispered that no appropriation should be made this year because, as a town, we find ourselves in such a decline. We are strenuously opposed to any such idea. At this time, when a general interest is being awakened all over the state in establishing libraries, we should be happy...that we, as usual, are in the van [sic]."*

The first book catalogue was prepared in 1895, at a cost of \$20.00; and in 1901 the school children were allowed use of the library books for the first time. A brief setback: a scarlet fever fright in the summer of 1902 required the library to be closed, and several volumes that had been handled by infected families had to be destroyed.

By 1903 the number of books had surpassed 1,000 and, speaking for the Trustees, Elgin Jones and George F. Gee wrote: *"Each addition.... gives greater evidence of the need of a special room or building. How much good it would do us, for someone to donate from his or her accumulations a sum of money.... to give us a fine library building. Who will speak first?"* The following year, since the appeal had gone unanswered, and *"owing to changes in business by Mr. Tinker,"** who had for several years been librarian, it was necessary to find a new location. Arrangements were made with Mr. Leander B. Huntley, *"whereby pleasant and convenient accommodations were secured."* In 1908 Elgin Jones declared that Marlow had one of the finest small libraries in the state.



Home of Leander B. Huntley, where library books were housed in 1904 and again in 1968. Shown on the photo are: Leander's son Roy Denzell Huntley (1881-1954), his wife Anne (Sears) Huntley, and their son Bayard. Photo was taken September 1912. On the far left you can see a portion of the Frank Lowell home, which burned in 1920.

The decision to move the books to the Huntley residence (see photo) proved to be providential since the Tinker Store burned down in the Fire of 1916. The library was still at the Huntley place on May 5, 1920, when another fire broke out, this time next door at the home of Frank Lowell. Amid fears that the fire would spread, it became urgent to rescue the books. The Keene Evening Sentinel reported: *"The children did splendid quick work to rescue the thousands of books from the public library. Everybody worked except a lieutenant in uniform who happened to pass through.... when the fire seemed most severe. He...sat down on some of the removed furniture, calmly smoking, when everyone was rushing with pails of water. A man, passing him, said 'Well, lieutenant, Nero had nothing on you.'"* After the fire the books were eventually moved to new quarters on the first floor of the Town Hall.

In 1923 yet a third conflagration threatened the library, when George Winham's house and barn (which stood where the new police station stands, behind Jones Hall) were burned to the ground, and the church and other buildings were threatened. The Keene Evening Sentinel of March 28 reported: *"Jones Hall, which is also used as the town hall and library, caught fire several times. Once it was thought it could not be saved and the books and hall*

(Continued from Page 1)

furnishings were removed." Tracy Messer recently commented that, *"there must be a 'guardian angel librarian' that has been protecting the collection whenever it's been threatened by flames."*

The library space in Jones Hall, to be sure, was a far cry from what it is today. Charlie Strickland recalls that there was a big wood furnace in the middle, and wood was stored inside the room. There was a two-hole toilet, and no running water. In the early 1960s the trustees made an urgent appeal for improvements. *"The time is coming," Mrs. Frances Strickland** wrote, "when the library will have to have more room. It is very hard to heat and the lighting is not good."* In 1967 an article was placed in the town warrant to pursue such action. At long last in 1968 the books were packed, moved to the Huntley residence temporarily, and then repacked and moved to their permanent home in the renovated lower portion of Jones Hall.

"By the time this report is in your hands," Mrs. Strickland wrote in 1970, "the library should be completely remodeled - a bright and beautiful place for you to come for your favorite reading material or perhaps even a record." A pickup and delivery service for the handicapped or housebound was instituted, and school students started using the library on a regular schedule. The trustees urged the town to give some thought to a state law that required running water in a building that had an employee.

The library's activities multiplied as the years went by, beyond anything the "founding fathers" could have ever imagined: movies, slide shows, puppet shows, story hour, historical displays, workshops, game nights, craft programs, book sales, and even a Cabin Fever Club. A copy machine was purchased in 1984. That year circulation of books, magazines and records reached nearly five thousand.

In 1985 the library sponsored the first open-air performance by "The Little Red Wagon." Bob Martenis built and donated the book drop box that we still use. Fun summer reading programs were introduced: Camp Wannaread, Octupi Your Mind, Some Enchanted Reading, Ketchup On Your Reading, Go Undercover With Books, and many others. The first computer was purchased in 1995 and set up by Tim Strickland; and internet access became available in 1999.

The library was thoroughly remodeled in 2001: new lighting, carpeting and a computer station were installed, and the children's area was redesigned. This was possible thanks to fundraising, donations, and money willed to the library by Mr. Russell Perkins.

There are scant references to librarians in the early decades. We surmise that the members of the Library Association took turns; and while the books were under the care of E.N. Howe and later Lucian and Addie Tinker, they probably assumed that role. The March 3, 1894 minutes read: "E.A. Jones was selected to conclude the term of L.D. Tinker as librarian." In the early 1900s the minutes mention Mrs. M. Haycock, Kate Winham, Mrs. Whippie, and Addie Tinker. Mabel Hatch served from the late 1920s until 1955. Ada Robbins was librarian until 1965 when she was replaced by Arlene Rhoades. Pat Strickland held the job from 1977 to 2012, and was followed by our present librarian Jen Brown.

** E.N. Howe had sold the pharmacy to Addie Tinker in 1893.*

*** To recognize Mrs. Strickland's many years of service and advocacy, a rocking chair was donated to the library in her memory by the Library Trustees.*

Summer Memories

William and Allan Abbott were Anne (Sears) Huntley's nephews, and they came to visit the Huntley homestead around the late 1940s to early 1950s, when they were 10 and 12 years old. Bill Abbott, who now lives in Naples FL, has sent us his recollections of their stay with Uncle Roy and Auntie Annie.

"As I remember we had two visits, each a week or two. As kids, it was priceless. Aunt Anne's son Bayard, who was in the army, drove us up to Marlow. A great trip, as automobiles to us in those days were special. We were so young and I guess it was our first adventure out of the city. We went in and out the front right door. I remember that Aunt Anne would not let us up in the attic. But way up behind the house was a cow farm and my brother and I watched cows being milked and went on milk deliveries. Loved it! One of the cows lifted its tail and squirted all over my brother. The iron bridge was the best. Just a swim or two. We never went close to the ice house, but were told that in the winter the ice was cut from the lake. As city kids you never forget that type of lifestyle. Another adventure: we went to the lake and found an old wooden boat in the reeds. We pulled it on shore, filled all the holes with mud and ventured out for a ride. Oh yes, we went down with the ship. We both could swim, got ashore, and Aunt Anne's comment was: 'Better get dry clothes!'"

Auntie Annie said as we left to go home: 'Silent Night.' I asked 'Why did you say that?' 'Well,' she said, 'it will be the first silent night we will have since you got here.' We loved our Aunt Annie!"



*L-R - Herbert Allan, sister Audrey Sears, and William Arthur - the Abbotts, plus Nicky the dog.
Approx. 1945-1950*

Personal War Sketches

This is the second transcription by local historian Tracy W. Messer

The book **PERSONAL WAR SKETCHES**, featured in our Spring/Summer newsletter, is one of the most important items in our museum collection. It was donated by the Hon. James Burnap, prominent Marlow citizen, to the Henry H. Stevens Post #86 of the Grand Army of the Republic.* It includes the personal recollections of eighteen local veterans, as well as a biography of the donor and the history of the Henry H. Stevens Post No. 86.

The pages are being transcribed by Tracy Messer and will be available at the museum. This will allow visitors to read them without handling the book itself, which should be preserved in its present mint condition. The printed form will be easier to read than the ornate cursive of the original pages; and transcriptions will be edited to correct spelling and punctuation to make them more understandable. This is the second transcription:

Historical Sketch of the Post

Henry H. Stevens Post No. 86, Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was instituted in the town of Stoddard, N.H. on the evening of November 11th 1885 by Deputy Collis of Portsmouth with the following Charter Members: Parker Hart; Edward B. Dodge; Rodney J. Brown; Marcus M. Bailey; Jonathan D. Hale; Cyrus G. McClure; David P. Sheldon; Albert O. Cutter; Elihu C. Turner; George W. Stevens; John Stevens; Albert H. Waldron; and Joseph Sweeney, honorably discharged soldiers of the Rebellion.

The first officers elected and installed were Parker Hart, Commander; Rodney J. Brown, Senior Vice Commander; Marcus M. Bailey, Junior Vice Commander; Jonathan D. Hale, Surgeon; Cyrus G. McClure Quarter Master; David P. Sheldon, Chaplain; Albert O. Cutter, Officer of the Day; John Stevens, Officer of the Guard. Edward B. Dodge was appointed Adjutant; Elihu C. Turner, Sergeant Major; and George W. Stevens, Quarter Master Sergeant.

The post was named in honor of Henry H. Stevens, who enlisted from Stoddard in Company A, 18th Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteers (N.H.V.), and died in Washington, D.C. November 3rd 1864.

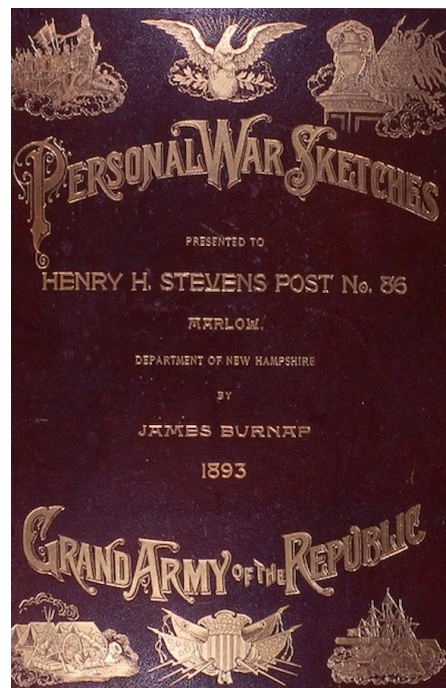
The Post remained with its headquarters in Stoddard and until the fall and winter of 1892 when very little interest deemed to be manifested in the Post only by a few of the comrades. And this, perhaps, was not surprising as some of the Comrades had moved away, and others resided many miles away, and old age was creeping on making it impossible many times to attend the meetings, and it was now with difficulty that a quorum could be obtained, and it began to look as though the Charter would have to be surrendered, and at a meeting of the Post held December 3, 1892 it was voted to instruct the Quarter Master to divide the Post funds among all Comrades in good standing which was accordingly done.

At a meeting held December 31, 1892 the subject was discussed and it was thought that perhaps the Post might be maintained by a removal of its headquarters to Marlow. The Comrades from Marlow pledging themselves to do all they could in its maintenance. And the Comrades in Stoddard, most of them expressing a willingness to remain as members of the Post, and several had expressed a desire to unite with the Post if it were moved to Marlow. Thereupon it was unanimously voted to remove the headquarters of the Post to Marlow, and a dispensation from the Department Commander was obtained allowing the removal, and the first meeting was January 28th 1893. And at its annual meeting in December, the Post was in quite a flourishing condition.

Ezra G. Huntley, Adjutant

Hosea Towne, Commander

* The Grand Army of the Republic was a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces who served in the Civil War. It included hundreds of posts (local community units) throughout the country, predominantly in the North.



Two Brides

Two young women....living in neighboring towns.....their weddings only two years apart. It isn't likely that they ever met. But on Sunday, August 18, 2019, Frances Dodge's bridal quilt and Jennie Louise Barnes' wedding gown were exhibited side by side at our Murray Hall museum.



It was a festive event, with nearly 50 people attending. In keeping with the theme, we served wedding cake and punch, and Joanne Thomas gave a presentation on Wedding Customs of our Rural New England Ancestors.

Frances Dodge was from Marlow and she was married in 1877. Her bridal "album" quilt was signed by parents, grandparents, relatives and friends. Jennie Louise Barnes was married in 1879 in her home in Walpole. She was the daughter of Harrison Barnes, who lived on Prospect Hill on farm now owned by Norbert Hudson.

This event was possible thanks to collaboration between the Marlow and Walpole Historical Societies; the quilt and wedding gown are part of our respective museum collections.

To add a poignant note, on the night table next to the quilt was the 1876 diary of a bride-to-be, Mary Phelps of Marlow. Entries show a young woman in grief after the death of her fiancé Elton Townes, yet carrying on with day-to-day life.

Plastic Waste Begone

There is too much plastic waste in this world and we will no longer contribute to this ecological scourge. At our recent quilt exhibit, we used standard plates and cutlery instead of disposable variants, along with glass punch cups. We had no paper and absolutely no single-use plastics. This means we have a dishwashing chore after each event, but that is a small price to pay for our planet. We hope other organizations will follow suit - Marlow could be a pioneer, and a model for Cheshire County.

Calling All Tees!!

Response to our appeal for Marlow T-shirts has been enthusiastic!! We have 23 so far, including some we didn't even know existed. Please keep digging into your closets. We want as complete a collection as possible. We will have a Marlow T-shirt exhibit in our museum next spring.



Finding Your Way

On May 25, members of the Way family from Oregon (Dane Way, his wife Darlene Confer, sister Janna Way Thorpe, and cousin Maxine Winnett) visited Murray Hall. They were delighted to find that we have a thick file for their family in our archives, and discovered that Pat (Huntley) Strickland is a distant cousin! They had been touring places in the US and Quebec where Ways had settled, and called the time spent chatting with us "one of the highlights of their trip."



They also visited their ancestors' graves in the West Yard Cemetery:

Daniel and Ruth (Moor) Way; settled in Marlow circa 1787, with their 8 children.

Christopher and Charlotte (Huntley) Way; Christopher, Daniel's son, was a blacksmith on Marlow Hill. He was killed by lightning in 1842 while working at his forge.

Asa and Lucy (Huntley) Way and their children: **Rufus**, who died at 7 months, and **Erastus** who drowned at age 15. Asa was Daniel's son.

Martin Wells - Daniel's son.

Alan Rumrill, director of the Historical Society of Cheshire County, wrote the following article that should be of interest to all of us in Marlow. Farley ink bottles are quite rare and are sometimes sold at auction. Thanks to Mr. Rumrill, who participated in a recent online auction and placed bids in the name of our Historical Society, we are now proud owners of a Farley ink bottle. Two generous members, Tom Cross and Joe Baril, contributed the amount for the winning bid.

**Monadnock Moments #52:
Marlow's Ink and Extract Manufacturers**



One of the most unusual and least remembered industries in the town of Marlow was the ink and extract manufactory operated by the Farley family. Bethuel Farley, born in Marlow in 1794, and his son Lucius and grandson Frank ran the business for more than fifty years.

Bethuel was manufacturing his ink by 1851 when it won an award at the New Hampshire State Agricultural Society Fair. Labels on surviving Farley's ink bottles read:

Farley's Extra Fine Black Ink. This is a new chemical preparation, by one of the most celebrated chemists in the United States, and possesses the invaluable property of keeping free from mould or decomposition, corrodes metallic pens less than any other and is not injured by freezing.

The Farley firm also produced extracts and flavorings, including peppermint, vanilla, witch hazel, castor oil, and even sewing machine oil. Lucius Farley continued the business after the death of his father, and Lucius' son Frank also joined the company.

A Farley billhead from this period listed a Boston address as well as the Marlow address, indicating that the Farleys had opened a distribution store in Boston. They also sold by mail and from peddlers' carts. The Farleys continued to produce ink until at least 1895 and Frank continued the extract business until about 1910.



The Farleys purchased the ink bottles from the glassworks in neighboring Stoddard. If not for these highly collectible small amber bottles embossed with the words "Farley's Ink" this Marlow business operated by three generations of Farleys for more than half a century would now be all but forgotten.



**Marlow Historical Society
Founded in 1976**

**President - Maria M. Baril
Vice President - Joanne Thomas
Secretary - Patty Little
Treasurer - Pat Strickland**

**Directors
Rhonda Lake
Sharyn Spalluto
Ed Thomas**

mhsnewhampshire@gmail.com

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

***PO Box 12
Marlow, New Hampshire 03456***

Marlow Junction - Intersection of Route 10 and Route 123A to Acworth

This photo was taken sometime in the early 1930s before the reconfiguration of Route 10. The Lunch Room was one of many businesses along Route 10 to accommodate travelers on their way to the White Mountains and Quebec. (See our Winter 2019 newsletter.)

This is the spot where, on Thursday October 10, 1912, President Taft took a wrong turn while heading to Marlow on his way to a campaign event in Keene. (See the article "The Late President's Visit" in our Autumn 2014 newsletter.)

