



Maybelle Still Building

ALSTEAD VINTAGE TIMES

ALSTEAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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Alstead's Vintage Times

Welcome to the maiden voyage of the Alstead Historical Society quarterly newsletter, Alstead's Vintage Times.

This periodical is designed to impart information about and from the Alstead Historical Society: the programs, the museum, the goals and the people. The objective of an historical society or any historic group is to make available the history of the town for research and teaching. The AHS is working hard to achieve that goal and with the aid of this newsletter, that information will become more readily available.

Alstead's Vintage Times will be comprised of articles concerning special interests, program schedules, news of the museum, contact information and some good old time fun. Feature articles may include photographs of people here to unknown for identification and reproductions of correspondence of a century and a half ago. Reports of current and future conservation of Alstead's historic documents will be presented as well as the progress on a reconstructed village exhibit presently being planned for the second floor of the museum.

Contact information will be available for those who wish to learn more regarding their ancestors. Knowledge of birth, death, marriage records, grave sites and ancestral homes is becoming more readily available as your Historical Society continues to grow, gather and sort information.

It is the hope that Alstead's Vintage Times will generate interest in the Historical Society, make people aware of its existence and availability and create the desire to participate on all levels in learning and preserving the history of Alstead.

Attention

It is that time of the year. Spring is coming and we can finally open our doors to a fresh bright world knowing we have survived yet another of New Hampshire's winters. People begin to emerge from the warmth of their homes, much like old bears emerging from their dens, to face the challenges and beauty of a new season.

To celebrate this renewing of life, The Alstead Historical Society has chosen this beautiful time of the year for their membership drive. In order for the society to continue to maintain the museum, offer programs to the town and conserve Alstead's treasured past, we need your support.

The guidelines are pretty simple: Students - \$5.00, Seniors - \$15.00, Individuals - \$20.00, Families - \$25.00, Sponsors - \$75.00, Contributors - \$100.00 and Life Members - \$250.00.

Your tax-deductible contributions may be sent to Alstead Historical Society, P.O. Box 16, Alstead, New Hampshire, 03602. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Marie Harling, membership chairperson.

Thank you.

JACKSON'S GARAGE

GENERAL AUTO REPAIRING

Tydol - Veedol

Alstead, N. H.

Museum News

2018

Hours: 10:00—2:00
May 28, July 14-15, Oct. 8

Museum open upon request. Call: Bruce, Margaret, David or Marie

SPECIAL EXHIBIT

Parlor Games & Toys
June 9-10 & 23-24



Collections: A History Past, Present and Future

Collecting is as old as man. It was what sustained the nomad for centuries as they gathered the raw materials to make their tools. When they began to adorn these objects of necessity, they became works of art, hence began the love affair with ritual use, trade and display.

We are a nation of collectors. It is human nature to gather items that interest and please us into a singular location for admiration, education, comparison and preservation. Most of us begin in our youth with objects of nature; sea shells, pretty rocks, the bright leaves of autumn, then graduate to little boy trucks and little girl dolls. In doing so, we learn to care for them, display them and acquire a discriminating eye as to which is the best and which is the mundane.

As we age, our interests become more sophisticated and many of us graduate to items of antiquity and history. Perhaps it is a longing for the good old days when life was simpler, or so it seemed. Perhaps it is the beauty or ingenuity of hand-made objects that draws our attention, perhaps it is the desire to keep our ancestral treasures close to us. As personal acquisitions grow, often items of less importance or desire are left wanting because of the lack of interest or display space. These items are often relegated to an attic, basement or barn, should we be lucky enough to have one. Families evolve and patriarchs die, passing their prized possessions to their relatives. However, in the grand scheme of life, this does not always work. There are instances where there are no offspring or if there are, the interest isn't there. In these cases, collections become scattered among more distant relatives and ultimately are either sold or destroyed. We have all heard the horror stories of once cherished collections being hauled away by the truck load, never to be seen again. Enter the desire for and the creation of historical societies and museums.

Reportedly, there were established historical societies in Western Europe as early as the 16th Century;

however, they understandably did not appear in the United States until the 18th Century. As the country grew and became wealthier, grand homes replaced the initial modest dwellings of our forefathers and with that the trappings of the elite appeared. Styles changed and over time these amenities also changed. The country was building its history and it became evident, by some, that this history needed to be preserved.



AHS Country Store Collection

In 1791, in Boston, Massachusetts, a gentleman by the name of Jeremy Belknap convinced nine of his friends to help him create "The Historical Society", later to become known as The Massachusetts Historical Society. He persuaded them to gather family papers, books and artifacts from their personal collections to be put on display for the purposes of teaching and preservation. Their meetings and fledgling museum were initially located in the attic of Faneuil Hall. After a few years of growth, it was relocated to Hampton Place, then to Provident Bank where the collection remained until 1899 when a permanent structure was built in Boston's Back Bay. It remains there today as the headquarters of The Massachusetts Historical Society, the first historical society in this new nation. Shortly after the founding of The Massachusetts Historical Society, other cities followed suit. New York, Providence, Philadelphia and Richmond all became centers for historic exhibitions and societies. Concord,

New Hampshire saw its first such organization in 1823.

By the turn of the century, the trickle-down effect saw local historical societies take root, and in the first half of the 20th Century there was a resurgence of interest in establishing organizations in the smaller villages and towns, Alstead was no exception. In 1937, the Alstead Historical Society was founded.

In 1910 John Graves Shedd and Mary Roenna Porter gifted Alstead its library. At the time of its inception, provision for a history museum was discussed and an area in the basement of the library was designated for that use. However, time passed and no historical organization was forthcoming, so the small number of artifacts that had been collected were housed in a cabinet. It wasn't until 1937 that interest was shown in establishing a society of this nature.

At that time an interested group of citizens formed the first Alstead Historical Society. They wrote the charter, by-laws and established a board of directors. C.J Newell was elected their president, Rev. George Marsh became their vice-president, J.W. Dickinson, secretary and treasurer and J.S. Chivers served as curator. The museum committee consisted of Marion Rawson, Maybelle Still and Leroy Estabrook. Sadly, no records of their activities can be found that give us insight into their events or undertakings. What is known is that the basement of the library was declared unsuitable to house the artifacts due to the dampness which permeated the area. After time, the organization faltered and no further attempts were made to reestablish the society for a number of years. Considering the dustbowl had ravaged the mid-west, the country was in the throws of the great depression and there was unrest in Europe, it was no wonder the thoughts of an historical society were not upmost in the minds of the townspeople.

Finally, in the 1980s when the town acquired the old Universalist Church building, was the Alstead Historical Society able to return to a viable organization. By this time many years had passed and the first founding's of the society had been lost and forgotten. As the story goes, Dorothy

Walker set out to institute a historical society complete with charter and by-laws. When presenting this to the town meeting, she was informed by Heman Chase that the town of Alstead already had an established Historical Society.

From that time, Alstead has maintained a viable Historical Society complete with a full board of directors, members and an active museum. The organization has been able to amass and catalogue thousands of artifacts donated by town's people, successfully provide a variety of programs to the public, establish the museum in what is now known as the Maybelle Still building and was instrumental in producing an unprecedented celebration of Alstead's 250 years of existence in 2013.

Today exciting projects are being planned and created allowing more of our history to be readily available to the people of Alstead. The old clerk books, the town charter, the second division map and the proprietor's book have been or are in the process of being conserved and digitized. This will allow family and/or land records to be easily researched by those building their family trees as well as those who wish to investigate historic facts for teaching or writing. A replication of the Paper Mill Village is being planned for the second floor of the museum; diverse programs will be available throughout each year for members and town's people to attend and enjoy. The addition of a quarterly newsletter will bring the news of the past, the present and the future to Alstead residents. Alstead is rich in history, the dedicated people who work with the society know this and are available to answer your questions, receive your donations and listen to the stories you have to offer. It is important to remember that our history sustains us, the more we know of our past, the greater chance we have of surviving our future.

MOORE BROTHERS
Complete Printing Service
Alstead, New Hampshire



AHS EVENTS NOTICE

April 25, 2018 7:00 pm
3rd. Congregational Church



New Hampshire Covered Bridges Glen Knoblock, speaker

Mr. Knoblock will discuss covered bridge design, technology, their builders and associated folklore.

Sponsored by NH Humanities To Go



Preview—June Issue

The June issue of the Alstead Vintage Times will double in size due to the amount of information the AHS has to offer. Look for comparison photographs of then and now, an article on the conservation of the Clerk's books A and C as well as information on the charter and the second division map. We will be bringing the next installment of the Sally Loomis letters. Also, more fun stories of the past as well as vintage advertising of previous businesses in Alstead. There will always be a picture of unknowns to help complete our records and satisfy our curiosity. We welcome any and all contributions, just call Peg at 835-7943 if you wish to write an article or have a story to tell.

Historic Humor



For Sale

One old car
With piston rings,
Two rear wheels,
One front spring,
Has no fenders
Seat or plank,
Burns lots of gas,
Hard to crank:
Carburetor busted
Half-way through,
Engine missing,
Hits on two.
Three years old,
Four in the spring,
Has shock absorbers
And everything.
Radiator busted,
Sure does leak;
Differential dry,
You can hear it squeak.
Ten spokes missing,
Front all bent,
Tires blown out,
Ain't worth a cent;
Got lots of speed,
Will run like the deuce,
Burns either gas,
Or tobacco juice.
Tires all off,
Been run on the rim;
A damn good car
For the shape it's in.

WHO DAT?

Each issue will feature a photograph of someone or someplace unknown to those at AHS. Can you help us identify these folks? If so, contact Margaret or Bruce.





**School House No. 5
Alstead Center
ca. 1910**



TOWN HALL
ALSTEAD
TO-NIGHT

THAYER-McKAY
MERRY MAKERS

A Company of Capable New York Artists
PRESENTING

3- ONE ACT PLAYS - 3

JEALOUS WOMEN
A Modern Laughing Success

GET YOUR MAN
A Thrilling Tale of the Northwest

BIG BUSINESS
A Riot of Fun

POLITE VAUDEVILLE BETWEEN ACTS

POPULAR PRICES **CHILDREN 25c, ADULTS 50c**

Dancing After the Play — Free of Charge

BEAUTIFUL VALUABLE PRIZES GIVEN AWAY
ABSOLUTELY FREE
BE OUR GUESTS — SEE HOW WE DO IT!

Theater ticket, believed to be from the early 1930's, found in Doris Dustin's scrapbook.



THE SALLY LOOMIS LETTERS

The AHS is fortunate in having in its possession letters written between 1827 and 1845 by Alstead's Sally Loomis and others to her son, Anthony Loomis, who eventually moved to Pennsylvania. These letters give us an insight into the life and times in Alstead beginning 191 years ago. In total there were over 61 letters sent to Anthony from his mother, his siblings and friends. Plans are to publish these letters, either in their entirety or excerpted, in each issue of the Alstead Vintage Times. Her former home is on Hill Road in Alstead Village.

Addressed to Peterborough, N. H.

Alstead, N. H. October 3rd 1827

Dear Son;

I am very sorry to hear that you are sick. I guess I enjoy better keep you at home and keep you at work. I think you enjoy better health than you do when you are gone. I have not had any letter from Jonas yet. We have sent every week to all the post-offices. Mrs. Grain begins to think that he is sick. Maria will write to him this week.

I have had a letter from Sally Whitney. She said that they had not heard anything from us since her father was here. She says they were very anxious to hear from you to know how your health is. She says if you will write to her she will answer as many as you will write. I wrote a letter and sent back last week by Issac Whitney. Lewis has fifteen acres to clear this fall, and they could not come to see us this fall. William has got the potatoes dug; we have not so many as we had last year. It takes forty hills to make a bushel. I have sold the old sow, or given her away to John Flagg for \$4.75. I sold the twin lams for sixteen shillings and the great lamb for nine and the yearling for nine, which made \$5.67.

I have engaged a pair of thin boots for you for a barrel of apple-sauce. I could not sell any cider not apples, so I must do as I can.

William has got the ploughing done, and the old horse has gone to Boston.

We have not gathered any corn yet, but must soon.

Your advice is very good, concerning Mr. Barnes; I certainly shall wait for all.

Eliza did not get home until Monday night. You may well think how I felt about Nancy. She stayed and went to meeting in Stoddard and drest Nancy in her white gown and no great-coat. She took a very bad cold, and the hogs ate up the whip, so we have none.

Mary was proper sick two or three days last week, with the chicking pox

Your cloth is ready for you any time. I ought to know when you will be home, so I can speak to Susan to be ready. If you are not well enough to help us a little about making our cider, you may write a line and let us know. If you will come and stay a week and have your clothes made and see to making the cider I will hire a man to help, for you know how William works. We must put our cider into the cellar, and next year we will live on cider brandy.

I have just returned from the cattle show. Mrs. Crain waited on me, and I waited upon her. It is dark and I must go to milking, so good night. Give my love to all.

Sally Loomis