

The Hancock Historical Society Newsletter

June 2020

OUR NEW HOME

Alan Gray

We are very pleased to report that the Hancock Historical Society has a beautiful new building on an acre of land donated by the Monteux School, situated between the Womans Club and the school's Tamarack Place headquarters. Access is by a driveway in from Captain Bill Road.

As of last August, HHS was hoping to build in conjunction with the Womans Club, on their land. We had gone so far as to get Planning Board approval. However, despite good intentions, issues arose due to the non-compatible legal structures of the two organizations.

At this point, Phil Devenish and the Monteux School board stepped in and offered the land. We quickly adapted our building plan, returned to the Planning Board, and got permission to proceed. Site work started in October; in November the well was drilled, the septic system installed, and the foundation slab *continued on page 2*

The Settling of Hancock

From "Hancock 1828-1928" by Alfred B. Crabtree and Hattie B. Martin

The first permanent settlement was made in the year 1764 on the Skillings River by Captain Agreeen Crabtree, great grandfather of Alfred Crabtree, who built his cabin on a point of land which was afterwards known as "Crabtree Point," now known as "Old Point," on the farm now owned by Ivory H. Foss.

He lived on the place where he first settled through the Revolutionary War and was a staunch patriot. He built a fort on his farm to defend himself against the British, the remains of the old wall may still be seen.

Philip Hodgkins located on the point of land next south, known by the name "Fish Point," on the farm of the late Capt. Ivory H. Foss. Pettingill's Point on the farm now owned by Hervey B. Scammons south of the above-mentioned point was settled by Shimuel Hodgkins. The father of Shimuel Hodgkins settled nearby on the farm of the late Capt. Jeremiah Wooster, now owned by Charles Colwell.

These first settlers built a saw mill and also a grist mill. Their dam extended from the Old Point to Hill's Island and from this island to Potter's Point. Hill's Island was named from a Thomas Hill who built a house and lived for a time at this place; he was one of twelve who organized the Baptist Church in Sullivan in 1810 and was chosen Deacon.

The town of Sullivan was surveyed by order of the General Court of Massachusetts in 1803 and the inhabitants had their lots of one hundred acres by paying five dollars each. Hancock was incorporated Feb. 21, 1828, being made up from parts of Sullivan, Trenton and Plantation No. 8.

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OUR NEW BUILDING – CONT'D

was poured. Building construction started in early January.

Gatcomb Grant Building and Construction was the design/build general contractor. Volunteers from HHS and the Monteux school worked with the GG crew. Gatcomb Grant wrapped up their work just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning affect everyone's daily lives. Their final effort was painting the walls and ceilings. During that period, we installed electric heat pump heating/cooling, the electricians installed lights and fixtures, and the plumbers completed their work. Since then HHS members have accomplished many additional tasks, most notably painting the floor.

The Historical Society now has a ground level, handicapped accessible, 2,400 square foot facility. Roughly half the space (30' x 40') is the new museum. There is also a large conference room (20' x 30'). Both the museum and conference room have cathedral ceilings. Separate spaces, with flat ceilings and storage above, were created for the library, archival storage, a small food prep area, a mechanical room, and a handicapped accessible bathroom. When the Monteux School is in session, the Conference Room will be utilized by school students as a practice area. The archival storage room has a dedicated heating/cooling system. The parking area will handle about 25 cars, with 2 handicapped spaces at the front door.

Still to come, as we regroup out of life with the pandemic, is fitting out the interior and finishing ground work. The interior work is being considerably slowed due to the pandemic.

This includes construction of display panels and acquisition of display cases for the Lois Johnson Museum. Packing for the move from upstairs at Town Hall was begun, but is at a standstill for now. Assembly of new exhibits is necessarily delayed.

Ground work will proceed, including surfacing the parking area and

driveway, final grading of disturbed areas, and some minor landscaping.

We had hoped to hold a Grand Opening in early July, tied in with the Maine 2020 observance. That event is delayed to July 2021. We do hope to have the building and exhibits open by early Fall, dependent, of course, on how the social distancing rules relax.

Our projected budget for building and furnishings is \$320,00. To date, we have received \$15,000 in grants, \$243,800 in donations, and over \$47,200 in donated goods and services, totaling \$306,000. We have expended \$219,000, plus the \$47,200 in donated goods and services and we estimate another \$54,000 in expenses to complete the project. That \$54,000 includes the \$25,000 we budgeted for an endowment. We are still hoping for another \$10,000-\$15,000 in donations to reach our goal. We extend our deepest thanks to all who have given to help make this dream a reality.

Looking to the future, we expect to explore, with the Monteux School, a joint solar panel installation. We need to understand the building's actual electricity usage before any decisions can be made.





CURATOR'S REPORT

Due to the Covid-19 situation the museum is not open for business yet this year. This may change as the State and Governor loosen the restrictions on gatherings.

The Grand Opening we had scheduled for July 11th will now happen in 2021.

Last summer was busy with visitors from near and far dropping in to see our collections and do research. It is always interesting to see where everyone comes from and how they arrived in our museum.

We accepted several donations, mostly Wooster family and Ora and Amy Jordan family photographs and letters. Some of the interesting photos in the Jordan collection are snapshots of a camper trailer Amy and Ora drove across country. There are several photos of them camping out along the way, along with letters they wrote about where they were and what they were seeing. Quite a trip for those days!

And speaking of the Jordan family, the spring issue of Lighthouse Digest has an article on Mount Desert Rock Lighthouse and includes a bit about Crabtree Neck Lighthouse and Ora and Amy Jordan. We were pleased to be able to share photos from our collection that Ora Jordan had taken. The magazine kindly sent us a copy for our collection.

We will be packing up the collection and moving it to the new building as soon as it is safe for us to do so. While we will miss our home upstairs at Town Hall, we look forward to the new space with storage room and designated areas for visitors to work on research. We thank the Town Officials for allowing us to use the Town Hall second floor for more than three decades.

Stay tuned for future updates and plan to visit us in the new museum next summer if not sooner.

Charlene Clemons, Curator

Email hancockme.history@yahoo.com

Join our Facebook Group at

Hancock.me_historical.society

THE HANCOCK POINT SCHOOLHOUSE

The Hancock Point Schoolhouse will be open this summer for people who would like to stop in. We are hoping for an art show by Renata Moise in August, conditions permitting and our annual visit from the Hancock Point Library story hour, if possible.



Library Story hour 2019

The school is 150 years old this year, so watch for the banner celebrating that on the front of the school.

The schoolhouse was closed during the 1917-18 Spanish Flu epidemic, but kept going, as we hope it will this year with people enjoying the charm of the old building.

New brochures about the school will be available at Town Hall, or the Hancock Point Library.

Call if you'd like to visit - 422 3408 or someone in the Historical Society. Pat Moll



OFFICERS

President: Sanford Phippen
 Vice President: Myrna Coffin
 Secretary: Charlotte Stetson
 Treasurer: Donald Parker
 Museum Curator: Charlene Clemons

BOARD MEMBERS

Sanford Phippen
 Myrna Coffin
 Charlotte Stetson
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 Elizabeth Singletary
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CALLING FOR ARTICLES

Do you have memories of growing up in Hancock? Or perhaps moving here later in life? Of the people you met who became friends or had a special influence in your life? Would you be willing to share those memories with us?

For the past two years we have had stories written by local people about their childhood in Hancock. We hope you have enjoyed these reminiscences. We would like this to continue to be a feature of our newsletter. Please consider writing a few paragraphs and sending them to us for inclusion in future newsletters. You don't have to be a published author – just be willing to share your memories. Thank you in advance.

SOLDIERS MONUMENT ERECTED IN 1912

At the annual town meeting held March 13, 1911, there was appointed a Monumental Commission as follows:

O. W. Foss, A. B. Crabtree, Bessie Walker, Nancy A. Young, S. L. Dow, Fred E. Milliken, Effie Cook, Elizabeth Oakes, Clara F. Johnson and Wm. W. Jellison.

At a special town meeting held June 17, 1911, voted to accept the donation by Mrs. Ellen B. Crabtree of a site upon which to erect a Soldiers Monument, and instructed the selectmen to procure a deed of the same. Also Voted, to instruct the selectmen to deliver to the Monumental Commission chosen at annual meeting 1911 the money known as the Monumental Fund and all other moneys that may hereafter accumulate for that purpose, when needed for the erection of a Soldiers Monument.

The full amount raised for the Monumental Fund was \$1649.18.

"Hancock 1828-1928"

GRANGE

Organized March 24, 1884

CHARTER MEMBERS

Leonard Wooster
 E. N. Foss
 Augustus I. Foss
 H. D. Ball
 D. T. Springer
 Isadora Wooster
 Sarah L. Wooster
 Martha P. Stratton
 Jennie Stratton
 A.A. Foss
 Almira T. Crabtree
 Rodman C. Smith
 Avon P. Foss
 Millard F. Foss
 E. H. Colby
 Martha P. Wooster
 R. I. Wooster
 Winfield Stratton
 Annie M. Stratton
 Minnie Hodgkins
 Eddie G. Abbott

J. N. Stratton
 S. U. Oakes
 Elijah Stratton
 D. H. Saunders
 Emma B. Stratton
 Lizzie C. Joy
 Alice G. Laws
 Nannie M. Abbott
 A. S. Wooster
 C. B. Young
 Joseph Crabtree
 Chas. H. Wooster
 Samuel Stratton
 Ulmore E. Foss
 E. J. Colby
 Ella F. Saunders
 C. L. Smith
 Mrs. O.A. Oakes
 Aubine Wooster
 Wm. C. Washburn

"Hancock 1828-1928"

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

After more than 40 years, the Historical Society of the Town of Hancock is moving from the upstairs in the Hancock Town Hall to its brand-new home between the Hancock Woman's Club and Tamarak Place on Route One. The original title was called The Historical Society of the Town of Hancock, because in 1978 Ellsworth still had an organization called The Hancock County Historical Society; and we didn't want to be confused with them. Our Society, however, I started in the back room of the Hancock Point Library when I was the summer librarian from 1978 to 1988. There was a lot of stuff left over from our Hancock Sesquicentennial (1828-1978) that filled up one old file cabinet.

By early 1977, there was a Sesquicentennial Committee formed in Hancock to arrange for the 150th birthday of the town, 1828-1978. The Committee included the chairman Lessie Lounder, secretary Vera Foss, photographer Maynard Foss, the honorary chairman Effie Cook, members Ruth Moon, Henrietta Thompson, Leon Thorsen, Clarice Walker, Sylvia Young, Russell Young, Sanford Phippen, and book-coordinator George Haskins. Regarding the latter, George then in turn told me that he was far too busy with his work as a lawyer in New York and Philadelphia, and so he was appointing me to actually do the history book.

My job at first was essentially to produce a new Hancock history book, replacing two older histories: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE SHORES OF SKILLINGS RIVER, 1870, by Thomas Foss; and HANCOCK AND ENVIRONS, 1928, by Alfred B. Crabtree and Hattie B. Martin, 1928. The latter history was presented every eighth-grade graduation in Hancock from 1928 to at least 1956, when I received my copy.

I loved reading the 1928 history; and since my parents, grandparents, and most of my family had grown up in Hancock, too, they all had wonderful and awful tales to tell about the place; and I loved hearing them.

Instead of teaching summer school in Syracuse in 1977, I was home in Hancock working on the book every spare moment. I went all around town recording people on my tape recorder. One woman told me, "Turn that thing off and I'll tell you the truth!" Thankfully, there were other Hancock people who wrote some of the chapters or provided me with a lot of facts and tales. For instance, Clarice Penny Walker, who was a teacher in Houlton, wrote all of Chapter Five on South Hancock, where she grew up; and it's lovely. Henrietta Thompson helped me, too, with the

Hancock Point chapter, as well as others. I spent the fall of 1977 finishing the book in Syracuse, including the Bibliography and Appendixes. I'm sorry there wasn't time to do a helpful index.

Off I sent the manuscript to Downeast Graphics in Ellsworth where they were hired to publish the book. What a thrill it was a few months later to receive the first copy of my first book! I spent the whole night reading it cover to cover. 290 pages! The only thing I didn't like was the cover design. It's a re-production of an old Hancock Town Warrant of 1833 and it is hard to read. Perhaps, if we have a new edition of the 42-year-old history, we could change the cover as well as update the old work.

The summer of 1978 our Sesquicentennial celebration was successful. In the parade of many vehicles, I got to ride in the lead convertible driven by Theresa Torkanowsky in her Hancock police uniform with other committee passengers including our leaders Lessie Lounder and Vera Foss. During all the hoopla, it occurred to some of us that perhaps we should begin to organize a town historical society that would meet regularly to preserve our history and have public programs throughout the year.

At the end of the summer, I was visited in the Hancock Point Library by two of our most prominent citizens, George Haskins and Lansing Hammond.

George was a prominent lawyer, who had graduated from both Harvard and Oxford and who was nationally known as an expert on the Constitution. Lansing Hammond went to Yale, and later taught there (one of his most memorable students was William F. Buckley). Before retiring to his summer place on Hancock Point, Lansing had a wonderful job with the Commonwealth Fund whereby he got to travel the world interviewing prospective and brilliant scholars to come to the United States (it was sort of a Rhodes Scholar program in reverse). One of Lansing's finds was none other than Alistair Cooke.

Both men had asked me beforehand how to start an official Hancock Historical Society for the town. I had contacted Augusta and told them, at first, it was going to cost us \$45 to apply for incorporation; and Lansing dug into his wallet, and slapped the money on the desk, and said, "LET'S INCORPORATE!" And so, we did.

Sanford Phippen
President



