



Washington Historical Society
Post Office Box 333
Washington, Maine 04574

www.washingtonhistorical.org

Upcoming Events

Washington Telephone Co.
John Ford, Maine Warden
Guided Tour of Medomak Camp
Hodge School Reunion – June 20
Annual Meeting – July 21
Open House Razorville Hall – September 12



One of the displays in the new museum.

Washington Historical Society

The Journey: town hall, garage, Museum!

In 1835, voters of Washington approved building a town office on property donated for the purpose by Worcester Farrow at what's now 264 Razorville Road – which was quite centrally located in the town at that time. James Rust (b. July 5, 1801 – d. January 11, 1871) was contracted to build the new structure for \$350.

Rust was expected to complete the job within a year. Indeed, the 1836 town meeting was held there and for many years to follow. In March of 1924 an article in the town warrant inquired whether “the town will vote to accept the offer made by Mr. Geo. H. Hamlen of Lewiston to transfer the ownership of the old church at Razorville to the town of Washington.” That “old church” was the former Free Will Baptist Church (263 Razorville Road). Voters accepted the structure and \$300 was raised for repairs to it. It became known as the Town House. Town meetings were held in that building until 1970. After the office at the former church closed, the structure was used by the town for storage.

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Permit #12

Newsletter #2 February 2015



The original town hall built in 1836 and the refurbished building at 264 Razorville Road will be known as Razorville Hall.

About four years ago, as Washington Historical Society's collection of documents and artifacts continued to grow, our members started to think about a permanent home. For a short time WHS considered constructing a suitable building on donated land in the village but it became obvious that costs would be much too high for our society.

Some rehabbing of the original old town hall had begun and it was suggested to carry the plan further to eventually become that needed center. A lot of thoughtful inquiries into ways and means took place. The Society saw its historical value and potential, so even though the structure still needed work and was “not much to look at,” made a commitment to fully refurbish it. The results so far are a credit to the whole town. More on page 2.

Museum! continued **Many hands . . .**

With help from members and many interested people the original old town hall has been partly refurbished. WHS held its first annual open house there last September.

We've been lucky. Much of the labor and materials for this transformation has been given by members and friends all over town and beyond.

They have completed:

- Excavation and drainage
- New sills
- Stripping and power washing walls
- Constructing platform and partitions
- Moving and arranging a ton of stuff
- Much, much, more

Many thanks to Merton Moore, Duane Vigue, Frank Campbell, Gary Tilton, Jud Butterman, Don Grinnell, Kendall Jones, Wendy Carr, Michele Jones, Liz Grinnell, and Hazel Kopishke for making sure things were ready for last fall's Open House.



More thank-yous

Washington Historical Society is grateful to Damariscotta Bank & Trust, Viking Inc., Machias Savings Bank, Hammond Tractors, Union Farm Equipment, The First, and the Ladies Guild of Washington for their support of this project.

We also recognize and thank donors of the innumerable gifts of documents, tools, household implements and other items. We appreciate them and your generosity!

Welcome Sandra Grinnell, WHS Webmaster

WHS wants to thank Cheryl McKeary who has been so helpful getting the basic framework of our new website set up and giving a hand to Sandra Grinnell our new webmaster. Sandy has volunteered to take over the care and feeding of our online site www.washingtonhistorical.org. Sandy is a native Washingtonite who lives half the year here in town and half in Florida. Thanks to the miracle of technology, she's able to manage the website no matter where she is. Welcome, Sandy!

What's in the name?



During the clean-up of the WHS museum-to-be, before any new wood or displays, the interior was hosed down by Don Grinnell and Jud Butterman. On one of the timbers, an unknown someone at an unknown time had printed in paint – Razorville Hall. The two men jokingly reported “at that moment, a name for the building was revealed ‘from above’.” Razorville Hall, it is!



Over the whole Razorville Hall Project is . . well, the ROOF. Estimates for repairing and re-shingling the roof are about \$8000. WHS has raised money from calendar sales and business donations. Still, we are a long way from the needed total. We are asking for any and all help. Thank you very much.

Please send donations to:
W.H.S.
PO Box 333
Washington ME 04574
Please write "Roof" in the memo line



These Old Houses



Written by Liane Chapman

John and Marty Christie's Restored Patchwork Farm.

John and Marty Christie have been restoring Patchwork Farm since before they were married 31 years ago. According to next door neighbor Wendell Ware, the house dates from around 1874. Wendell recalls that as a teen ager, he sometimes helped then owners George and Angele Ritter. George Ritter had worked for the Mendleson family and his wife Angele was a seamstress. When George died, he left the house to Wendell and Helen Ware with the proviso that Angele would remain there until her death. After Angele went into a nursing home in the 1970's, the Wares, not wanting to restore the house themselves, were about to put it on the market when John and Marty discovered it. The Wares had kept their horses in the old stable on the property and used the pasture. Owners before the Ritters included Maynard Jodry and his son, preceded by the well-known local lawyer, Murray Staples. The original parcel was much larger than the property is now.

Next to the house stands a three-story barn which provides the background for a rock wall fronted by a colorful garden. John and Marty bought the somewhat dilapidated old farm because it was about half way between their work in Hallowell and their lobster boat in Rockport. Living at first at the Rockport lighthouse and later in the farmhouse, they began to remodel. John relied on his experience in the sixties restoring an old farmhouse near Sugarloaf. Starting from scratch they removed newspaper and linoleum from floors, and scraped off coats and coats of paint plus many layers of wallpaper to get to the original wall surfaces. It was "a hell of a lot of work," says John but the result was a comfortable home in which to raise their twin sons Josh and Jake, born in 1985.

One of the many paint-removal challenges they faced was to remove paint from an ornately carved wooden mantelpiece. A friend advised sandblasting which worked well, not just on the mantel, but also a heavily painted ceiling. The name Patchwork Farm evolved from the extensive patching of old plaster and lath walls.

John had the chimneys replaced. He noted that Angele Ritter had used only two or three rooms before she moved to the nursing home. The original stove is still a feature of the kitchen, but as the furnace no longer worked, Angele converted the stove to burn oil rather than wood. The original sink remains in the room as well. Rooms behind the kitchen are a pantry and another room that evolved from a potting shed, to a workroom, to a display room for the boys' trains. Now it is an office.

As we went through the house, John pointed out the comfortable front porch which he had enclosed, some restored tin ceilings, a bathroom tub from the Ritters' era, and a small section of wall which he had left unchanged for historical purposes. A wheel chair, now re-caned, came from the cellar and at present is part of the living room furniture. The second floor features beautiful old wood floors, two bedrooms and a small bath, plus some closets fitted into angles as is typical of old houses.



John described the extensive efforts involved in bringing the old barn back to life. The foundation beneath the caving-in floor had to be supported so that the upper levels could be jacked up. A new roof completed the restoration. The stone retaining wall in front of the barn is new, built from rocks removed from a nearby spot by the Highway Department. Once the house had become livable, John and Marty began work on the lawn and plantings to create the attractive property the Christies own today. He noted that the present Waldoboro Road in front of the farm was not in the path it takes today, but originally ran much closer to the house across the street where there was a mill.

This article was written by Liane Chapman [1936-2013] shortly before her cancer diagnosis. We are grateful for her incomparable contributions to our Society and our town.



WHS – The Washington Historical Society story

Washington Historical Society is a group of people who enjoy learning, knowing and sharing the history of the town of Washington, Knox County, Maine. We have fun working to protect historical documents and items and to record and preserve them.

At a meeting of the local United States Bicentennial Committee in July of 1975, it was decided to form a society whose first objective was to produce a book of Washington history. The volume was to be ready to be presented at the U.S. Bicentennial celebration. Sixteen society members worked with Murray Jamison who volunteered to coordinate the publication which included facts and stories shared by townspeople. At that time the WHS met on Thursday evenings at the VFW Hall. The first officers President; Anne Novisky, Secretary; and Donald B. Grinnell, Treasurer. The group had a treasury of \$350 donated by Donald Bickford in honor of Frederick Lyman. The group stated in the town report that they hoped to create by-laws and assist with the restoration of “our old Town Meeting House.” In addition, they hoped to invite speakers who would further understanding of the town’s past.

The following year, WHS reported to the town that the society had had a busy year. They had produced the Town History Book to include in the Town Capsule Burial, incorporated on June 3, 1976, and passed a set of by-laws. They also elected a board of directors that included Ed Ludwig, Alma Jones, Eugene DeGroff, Murray Jamison, Beverly Moody, Phoebe DeLeto, and Linda Wirtz.

We'll bring you more in our next newsletter .

Washington Historical Society is . . . a member organization welcoming all those interested in the chronicles, development and significance of the town of Washington from its beginnings to the present. We get together once a month on the third Tuesday. Everyone is welcome to come for a visit. We invite all to become members and support our society, our projects and our community.

Washington Historical Society
3rd Tuesday of each month – 7 p.m.
Mt. Olivet Masonic Lodge, Lower Level
www.washingtonhistorical.org
washingtonhistorical@gmail.com

Membership is \$5 per year
Donations always welcomed.

Resources, archives accessible by appointment

Resource materials, cemetery volumes and other documents located in Office #2 at Mt. Olivet Masonic Hall, 48 Liberty Road, can be viewed by appointment. If you'd like to spend some time looking over WHS's resource materials or research something of special interest, please call our archivist Liz Grinnell, at 845-2377 to schedule a visit.



Cheryl Mank Swift has completed documentation of another local cemetery, Levensaler. Previous volumes include Maple Grove, Light, Mountain, Howard, Clark, Pierpont, Davis-Daggett, and McDowell. Cheryl has invested a tremendous amount of time and materials to photograph, map, gather and compile names, locations, dates and anecdotal information. We are very grateful for her interest and efforts to preserve this part of Washington's history. Thank you!

Our website is:

www.washingtonhistorical.org
Please give us a look!

Let us know your ideas and suggestions at 845-2661 or washingtonhistorical@gmail.com



Washington Historical Society members visit Advent Camp

WHS was warmly welcomed by Deborah Cooper Harding and friends to the Advent Christian Camp last summer with entertainment, a tour and a delicious meal. Harding is author of “We Shall Rise – A History of the Washington Maine Advent Christian Campmeeting Assn.”

Other programs we enjoyed include John Ford, Maine Warden; Neil Lash, Heirloom plants; John Bunker, Heirloom Apples; Josh Christie, Maine Beer History; Harborside Harmony, Concert; Music from Anna Grinnell, Concert; Lenfest history and more.

