

2009 Grantham Historical Society Report

2009 was a good year for the Grantham historical Society but was also a sad year because of the people we lost. Herman Barton died just before our oral history specialist, Christina McKahan, was arranging to interview him, so we lost a great resource of Grantham history. But we also learned a lesson: we should get oral history from people of lesser age while they are still healthy and their memories are clear and fresh.

In July, Dennis Howard died. He was an invaluable member of GHS, having generations of knowledge of Grantham and he gave the Society lots of artifacts, books, photos and other materials. His wife, Connie, will probably furnish us with still more.

Then in the early fall, Bert Smith died. He was from Croydon but was an honorary member of GHS. Bert did a great amount of work for us and gave us many tips and information on increasing membership and fund-raising, all knowledge he gained as treasurer of the Croydon Historical Society. Like the others, we will miss him.

Then came the death of our own treasurer, Phyllis Forest. Phyllis was far more than a treasurer; she was just a beautiful person. She kept her sense of humor even when she suffered a terminal illness. She was one of a kind.

Also, Mrs. Ann Tenney died. The name may not be known by most GHS members now, but members in the 1990's knew how much she did for the Society. She was vice-president of the Newport Historical Association and also took an interest in GHS. She loved to do research in the Cheshire County records in Keene or the New Hampshire records in Concord. After 2000, her health began to fail and she had to give up driving which cramped her style greatly.

So – these were our sad events in 2009. Now for some better news. The GHS room in our building can only be used for gatherings of thirty people or less, so if we expect more for an event, we use the new town office lower floor. There we held our annual meeting in May with Rebecca Rule as our speaker as well as a very well-attended program on the Draper Corporation in October.

Other events during the year included a village walking tour in June conducted by our vice-president, Ken Story. We are thinking of having a walk in a different part of Grantham in 2010. We welcome ideas for such a walk and specific locations.

We set up shop on the new sports and recreation area off Cote Road on the Fourth of July. The day was hampered by rain – but we persevered.

Later in July, Bob Champagne, GHS trustee, gave an excellent, well-presented lecture on Alexander Knox and his heroic exploits bringing the cannon captured at Fort Ticonderoga to Boston in wintertime. He supplemented his talk with maps and photos of the route and its current historical markers. The large number of attendees, many not

from Grantham, prompted us to make plans for holding our programs elsewhere due to lack of space.

In September, Craig McArt, Ken Story and I gave a talk and photo exhibition on the Draper Corporation history in New Hampshire. Geraldine Moulton attended. She grew up in Beebe River and as a young woman worked for three years for Draper. She brought her old identification button to show. Mr. McArt's computer show of photos was impressive. This included historic photos (Grantham and Beebe River) and current photos (of remaining Draper cottages, now private homes).



Then the New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association came to town. I gave a talk on Grantham history and its graveyards; then the group split into two – Renee Gustafson and Bob Champagne took one group to inspect the Mountain Cemetery and I took the second group to the Dunbar Hill and Brown Cemeteries. The visitors found much to criticize in their inspection and they gave us much good advice about improving things, especially at the Brown Cemetery.

Now I must say a word of appreciation for those who give their time and expertise free to the Historical Society. If I have forgotten someone, please forgive me. No person is absolutely indispensable but Pat Andrews comes very close. She has transformed the old kitchen area into a practical office. There isn't room to tell in detail all she has done; we can only say thanks, Pat.

Thanks to Vice-president Ken Story for all the travel and research he does. And to Director, Bob Champagne, for his ideas and work, particularly on the budget and all money matters. And what is there to say about Renee Gustafson? She is always working and planning and doing things both indoors and out, with special attention to our exhibits with her exceptional photography. Thanks to Kathi Osgood for taking over as treasurer. We need someone with an accounting background to assist her in the now-cumbersome

state and federal financial reporting requirements. We appreciate Craig McArt's computer labors (especially scanning the Society's photograph collection) as well as his suggestions as Board member.

Thanks to Bob Osgood for his ready availability when we need some problem with the building attended to. Thanks to Lea Frey and Barbara Mutney for their town archival work that sometimes involves GHS.

And thanks to all our regular visitors: Geraldine Moulton, Joey Holmes and Hap Roney for gifts of artifacts and verbal history. Our on-going appreciation goes to Laurajean Whitcomb who in addition to much historical help, manages our website and to Barbara Rodgers, a member of the Collections Committee, who has been kept very busy this year reviewing the many donations that have come in.

Lastly, the Executive Committee has made a decision to commit to writing a History of Grantham. Financial support from the town has been in place since the early 1990's and several attempts have been made which faltered. We have set a goal for 2013 and welcome any Grantham resident's assistance in this extensive undertaking. Just stop by on a Friday afternoon – we will welcome contributions from all interested citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Allen W. Walker
President

**GRANTHAM TOWN ARCHIVES
34 Dunbar Hill Road**

What are Archives?

“In general, archives consist of records which have been selected for permanent or long-term preservation on grounds of their enduring cultural, historical or evidentiary value. Archival records are normally unpublished and almost always unique, unlike books or magazines for which many identical copies exist. This means that archives (the places) are quite distinct from libraries with regard to their functions and organization, although archival collections can often be found within library buildings.”
(Wikipedia 2009)

Presently the Grantham Archives is a growing part of the Town Administration not only for storing and preserving town records from the late 1700s to the present but also for the future. The early Town Selectmen and Tax Collector records, Vital Statistics, early Church and Library records and early photographs are the dominant records among the collections.

The Town Archives is open to the public on Fridays from 1 PM to 4 PM or by appointment. The telephone number is 863-9701.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Lea Frey
Grantham Town Archivist**