President’s Message

The annual meeting of the Springfield Historical Society will be on Wednesday, July 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Meeting House. There will be a reception at the museum after the program. Our speaker will be Joan Huber, White House nurse during the Reagan administration. Joan received her degree in nursing from the University of California with a clinical emphasis in critical care. She served as Executive Officer of TRICARE Northeast in Washington, DC, was Commanding Officer at the Naval Hospital at Twenty-nine Palms, CA and is currently an Assistant Professor at Colby Sawyer College. Joan has received numerous Service Ribbons, Commendation Medals, Meritorious Service Medals and is listed in Who’s Who of American Women and Women of the World. She is a noted lecturer throughout the country on clinical topics, management and leadership issues. The title of her presentation to us is “A Nurse at the White House”. We are honored to have Joan as our guest speaker and hope you will join us and come to the museum afterward for refreshments and a look at our new “old” acquisitions.

Membership Month
June 30th is the end of our 2001-2002 year. Please consider joining the Historical Society again. The form for submitting your next year’s dues is in the back of the newsletter. We need the support of those who care about Springfield.

Thank You!
Thank you, Barbara and Donald Garlock for providing the April refreshments, and to Carol and Joe Demaris for volunteering for July refreshments. Thank you, Dickie Hopper, for the “Runaway Horse” story in the April 2002 issue of our newsletter.

Springfield Historical Society Annual Report
2001-2002

What does the Springfield Historical Society do that makes it a worthwhile organization to join?

Programs

Our quarterly programs have been quite popular. Janet Roberts organized our 2nd annual pot luck dinner in October 2001. It was followed by a program “Through the Eye of the Camera, the Changing Rural World of NH.” In January, Bill Sullivan and Bob Nulsen presented information and encouraged discussion about the military operations in Afghanistan and hostility between Palestinians and Israelis. Bill had spent several years on assignment in Vietnam, Pakistan, Nepal and Israel. Bob was with special forces and the rangers. Our speaker for April was the NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Stephen Taylor, who gave a very interesting talk on agriculture in Sullivan County and how it was affected by sheep farming in the 1800’s. Our July program will feature Joan Huber, White House nurse during the Reagan administration.

Newsletter

The historical society also publishes a quarterly newsletter thanks to Donna Denniston. We are always looking for material from our members to share their memories or historical information about Springfield.

Equipment

During the last year, Springfield had the old town records microfilmed. The historical society has purchased a microfilm reader which can be used in the Libbie Cass Library. We are also sharing the cost for shelves to hold our material that can be used for research. This will be located in the NH Room of the Library. We
enjoy our partnership with the Libbie Cass Library and their generosity providing space for meetings of the historical society over the years.

Improvements
We were pleased by the paving of the museum parking lot by the town.

Genealogy
Muriel Tinkham has answered many genealogical requests by and for people all over the United States each year.

Cemetery Survey
Dorothy Eldeen and Patsy Caswell are making a survey of all the Springfield cemeteries and records of all the stones. We have finished most of the smaller cemeteries, but are still working on the Old Pleasant View when we can get together.

You will notice that our officers and board of directors remain much the same from year to year. We would love to have some “New Blood” in 2003-2004. Feel free to serve as an officer or a board member or get involved in other ways that might interest you. 

I strongly believe that it does not matter if your family has been here 200 years, or if you just come to Springfield for weekends or for the summer. When you are in Springfield you are making memories which are part of our town’s history. Share it with us! Patsy Heath Caswell, President, Springfield Historical Society

Red Cross Greeters Served with a Smile

[ Peggy Downey Knowlton, the author of “Red Cross Greeters Served with a Smile” is no stranger to Springfield. Her grandfather, Dr. Samuel Adams, from Washington, DC was encouraged by Dr. Gary Morgan to establish a summer home here in 1899 at what was known as Adamsfort. It is now owned by the Rodgers family and is located a short distance off the Grantham Road. Three and four generations spent their summers at Adamsfort through most of the 20th century before the property was sold. In 1955, Peggy’s parents, Fairfax and Mildred Adams Downey, built their year round home on George Hill Road. They lived there until their deaths. The property has since been sold. Peggy is married to General William Knowlton, Retired and lives in Arlington, VA. She still has fond memories of the New Hampshire hills. ]

While my husband, Bill, was fighting his way across Europe in 1944, I was part of a Red Cross welcoming committee greeting wounded soldiers who’d been shipped home.

For security reasons, their arrival was kept secret. We’d meet the ships in guarded areas at Hudson River piers. There were no bands or families waiting – just ambulances, dock workers and us volunteers, carrying baskets of candy bars and comic books for the boys.

We were not there to give embraces or to lend our sympathy. Our job was to hand out the candy and comic books and give the boys a heartfelt “Welcome home”. Most important of all, we were instructed to smile - no matter what we saw or felt.

Single file, we followed our military escort to the lowest deck of the ship where the wounded lay on their litters.

Girls Spread Cheer
As the word spread, we heard, “Hey, it’s girls! American girls!” We’d spread out and distribute the candy and comic books, along with words of welcome. Wisecracks and offers of dates abounded, and our smiles were usually returned with enthusiasm.

Often, though, we’d come to a bunk where a young soldier lay silently, with tears trickling down his cheeks. He’d turn his head away as we put a candy bar or comic book beside him.

After walking through all the wards and emptying our baskets, we’d leave the ship to calls of “Don’t go!” And “Thanks a lot!”

Back in our cars, we could finally unglue our smiles and let our tears loose, thinking of those boys and the long days of recuperation to come. At least they were home, and our little group had made their last ship bound hours a little brighter.

by Peggy Downey Knowlton

[See news photo on next page]
Red Cross Greeters Served with A Smile

Sometimes it was hard to keep a smile while greeting the wounded coming home from the war, but the job was rewarding.

VOLUNTEER SPIRIT. By April 1946, author (left, in train car) had traveled to Germany to join her husband. She was welcomed by a fellow Red Cross worker with the well-known doughnuts that made the greeters so popular.

Overlook Country Club (see page 4)
Feb. 22, 1977

Dear Mrs. Downey:

In looking over some momentos of the town of Springfield, I came across the enclosed. I copied it in 1969 during the Bicentennial fever from a clipping found in a book of them kept by my Aunt Florence Philbrick Clark- who lived at Bill Hill’s place long ago.

I thought you might enjoy reading it. After you have finished, would you please pass it on to Mrs. Mabel Patten in the village? She is interested in such things and it all occurred on what is now their land across from Mrs. Hazel Patten’s house.

Have always enjoyed your Christmas cards and hope this gives you pleasure,

Sincerely,

Verna Philbrick Cote

OVERLOOK COUNTRY CLUB

"New Washington" turned out en masse on Saturday afternoon at the Overlook Country Club, assisted by the members of the summer colony of other places and some of the bona fide residents of Springfield, for the purpose of formally opening the new playhouse which has been in process of construction during the commencement weeks of the season.

The affair, although somewhat handicapped by a drizzling rain during the latter part of the afternoon, was very enjoyable one, and reflected credit upon the entertainment committee, which consisted of Dr. Samuel Adams, Mrs. Lismer and Mrs. Richardson. The energy with which the occasion was carried forward showed plainly that the summer visitors to Springfield have keenly at heart the social well-being of their settlement, which at first was but a mere handful, but has now developed into one of the prominent summer burgs of the Granite State.

At about 3 p.m. Carriages commenced to arrive at the scene of enjoyment by way of "Howard Avenue", which until recently was nothing but a track through the forest, but has been transformed into a carriage path and will eventually e one of the pleasantest drives for which this community is famous. This street derives its name from the fact that it joins the main highway near the enclosure of Mrs. Lewis Howard, widow of the late Rev. Lewis Howard, who was for many years pastor of the church at West Springfield, and a man whose memory is held very dear by all who resided in Springfield during his long pastorate there.

The gathering grew gradually until at four o’clock the party numbered some over 200 people, who for a time amused themselves in exchanging greetings and looking about the grounds.

Dr. Adams, as chairman of the entertainment committee, called the party to order and after a few remarks introduced Dr. Morgan as president of the club.

Among the party was noticed Col. John Boyd of Washington DC, father of Mrs. Morgan; Prof. Geo. N. Keller of Washington, who is a noted scientist; about 25 summer guests from Twin Lake Villa, and a goodly number from Pleasant Home and other summer houses at Georges Mills; Dr. And Mrs. Goodhue and Miss Goodhue, Charles McDaniels, Rev. C. T. Matthews, E. R. Heath, Mr. And Mrs. Orin Heath, Walter Clough and others represented the winter population.

An account of the opening would not be complete without a brief history of the conception and development of the idea which has resulted in the completion of the unique structure. When the summer colonists reached sufficient numbers to become a social set in themselves, the need of some place of general rendezvous became apparent, so the question of erecting some sort of structure to be used as a clubhouse was agitated. After due consideration, it was decided to purchase the barn located on what is known by the natives as the John Nichols place, together with about 30 acres of land, and convert the building into one which would meet the requirements. A committee was appointed to take the matter in charge; constitution and by-laws were drawn up and the results can easily be seen. The outside of the building has been put in attractive shape, and spacious plazas have been built on two sides. The walls and overhead on the interior were left in their original condition, giving it a very rustic appearance. A new floor was laid and a fireplace built. The “scaffold” has been converted into a balcony, and the tie-up is now used as a telephone booth and office for the desk where all visitors are requested to register. The place is provided with a piano and various other conveniences and sources of amusement.

The general purpose of the club is for the promotion of outdoor sports, such as golf, tennis, lawn bowls, croquet, quoits, football, baseball, boating and bathing, together with indoor recreations, such as cards, dancing, Ping-Pong, basketball, billiard pool, bowling and the like. The
membership is divided into two classes, life members and season members, the life memberships being limited to 10 and the season membership to 100. The members are distinguished by a lapel button, bearing the club monogram. "O.C.C."...

The organization is as follows: President - Dr. Morgan; Vice President - Dr. Adams; Secretary - Mr. Richardson; Treasurer - Ruelle L. H. Heath; entertainment comm. - Dr. Adams, Mrs. Lisner, Mrs. Richardson; finance committee - Mrs. Lisner, Dr. Kinham, Mr. Richardson; house comm. - Col. Boyd, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Einhorn; grounds comm. - Miss Robertson, Mrs. Boyd, Mrs. Morgan; membership comm. - Dr. Einhorn, Dr. Adams, and Mr. Richardson.

Dr. Morgan responded fittingly, speaking in the course of his remarks of the regard he had for the people which composed the party and for the community in general. He also alluded to the beginning of the town as a summer home and gave a brief history of its development since. In concluding he introduced Elroy N. Heath of Boston, to whom he said was largely due the credit for their being there, as it was he who first considered the idea of coming to Springfield to spend the summers and finally induced others to follow his example.

Mr. Heath cited several amusing reminiscences in the course of his remarks, after which the president requested the party to step outside upon the veranda to take part in the ceremony of raising Old Glory and the club pennant. The doctor said that the national colors were somewhat the worse for wear of the weather, but they were not being raised for their appearance as a piece of bunting, but for what they stood for, which was never the worse for wear. Miss Dorothy Adams, the little daughter of Dr. Adams, pulled the halyards which raised the banners to the top of the 7555 foot staff, while Gardner’s orchestra played the “Star Spangled Banner”. The party stood with bared heads and gave three rousing cheers; first for the starts and stripes, and secondly for the banner of the Overlook Country Club.

The assemble then returned to the inside and were given refreshments. The following ladies had this feature in charge: Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Boyd, Mrs. King, Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Richardson, Mrs. Lisner, Mrs. Freeman, Mrs. Scoville, Miss Bates, Mrs. Fill, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Pierce, and Mrs. Heath.

After a time dancing was indulged in until about seven o’clock when the party dispersed, all being of the opinion that a fitting precedent had been established for the social management of their new place of enjoyment.

[photo below: from Maybelle Colby’s things. Perhaps a raising of a water tank at the Club House kept by Washington DC Summer residents of Philbrick Hill and others. On hill back of Patten’s barn now (1987) and back of Sacks home]

It is time to pay your dues! Our society depends on you for support and participation.