March, 2003

President's Message:

The Springfield Historical Society will meet Thursday evening, April 10th, at 7:00 pm at the Libbie A Cass Library Conference Room, Main St.. The speaker will be Allen Koop on the subject of the German prisoners of war camp during World War II at Camp Stark, NH. It should be an interesting program.

Some thank yous are in order. Donna Denniston has not only been our secretary for several years, she has also done a wonderful job organizing the newsletter four times a year. Due to her busy professional career, she decided to retire from the newsletter. I have agreed to continue it. Oh to be as good as Donna!! For the last three years, another busy lady, Janet Roberts, has organized the very popular October pot luck suppers. Janet thinks that it should now be someone else's turn. She said that it isn't difficult and she is willing to turn over her information and supplies to anyone who will volunteer. Working quietly behind the scenes is Muriel Tinkham who has been a great source for people looking for their Springfield roots and also giving classroom talks to students. Thank you to these three ladies.

Patsy Heath Caswell,
President

Springfield Schools

In the January issue of this newsletter, the story of Center School, now the historical society museum, was told. We will continue the story of education in Springfield this issue.

District #2, Kempton School was located on the Kempton Road off the Fourth NH Turnpike (4A). It was a little south of Mud Pond on the right before the Springfield/Wilmot townline. All of the earliest school registers at this time, date back to 1857-58. This may have been the beginning of keeping official school information. The poor young teacher, Susan Craft, taught for thirteen and a half weeks. She was paid $6.00. It was her first assignment. She had thirteen students ranging in age from 5 years to 19 years of age. The 19 year old did not finish the term. The thirteen students were tardy 35 times. Seven studied arithmetic, 6 studied geography, three learned penmanship, and 10 of the 13 studied reading and spelling.

In 1865, a successful Ann Taylor taught 15 students for six weeks during the summer. J. Sewell Brown taught 13 students for six week winter term. Mr. Brown reported that the school was so cold, the pupils “were shivering over a red hot stove. A few more dollars would have prevented this.” In October of that year, the district voted to raise $25.00 to repair the school. They could borrow in the credit of the district and/or have the tax assessed in the Spring of 1866. In May, the district voted to raise $30.00 to repair the school and buy a new stove. The selectmen were requested to “access a tax for the same.”

Over the years, there was often no summer term at Kempton School. In 1866-67 there was a 6 week winter session for 25 students. In 1867-1868, there was a 12 week winter session. There was only one 8 week term during 1873-74. The number of terms taught a year seemed to have been made by the district committee and
varied from one district to the other. There was no uniform school year.

Emma Walker taught a little over 11 weeks of summer school to 19 students in 1881-92. Her salary was $15.00. The students ranged in age from 4 to 19. All of the students in the district were attending school. Miss Walker and the students were visited by Superintendent Charles McDaniel and Moses Noyes, the Prudential committee member. She had no good words to say about District 2. There were no blackboards, clocks, maps, or globes. When asked if the school was pleasantly located, she wrote, It is not.”

Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, Kenmore School struggled to exist. In 1892, there were 5 students. There was no school from 1894-1898, but resumed for 8 weeks in the 1898-1899 school year. When the school was not in session for the 1908-09 school year, the Dozois girls who lived in District 2 were boarded for three weeks with Hilda Clough who lived at the corner of 4A and the Old Grafton Rd. The only school in the eastern part of town at that time, was Maxfield School, not too far from the Springfield/Grafton townline.

During the 1909-10 school year, Mrs. Dozois was paid $10.00 by the town of Springfield, for conveying her daughters to the Dodge School in Willmot. Springfield also paid $3.00 tuition to Willmot School for the 1912-13 school year. Fred Dozois was paid $6.50 to repair the school. Else Dozois was paid $50.00 for teaching there. The school struggled on during the next few school terms. By 1918-1919, there were only two children registered in the Kempton School District. There were more visitors (8) that students! Mrs. Lillian Fowler was paid $20.00 a month to teach them.

The end of Kempton School came in 1925. The children were transported to Maxfield School by Mrs. Grace Russell who was paid $34.00 for the service.

District #3

District #3 School was located in the southwest part of Springfield, west of Star Lake on a road that may have been called Schoolhouse Road that connected with Sanborn Pond. It was north of Baptist Pond, and east of present day (2003) Route 89.

In 1857-58, there were two terms at District #3. The first term was 11 weeks and the second term was 15 weeks. Mary Goff taught both terms and was paid $12.00 for each including board. The students ranged in age from 3-17. There were 21 students first term and 19 students the second term. Twenty-three citizens visited the first term and 15 people visited the second term. Charles McDaniel Superintendent for the school committee, visited twice each term. Jonathan Smith, Prudential committee, visited once each term.

An eight week summer session was taught by Lorinda Addison in 1858-59. She was paid $12.00 including board. There were 24 students ranging in age from 4-18 years of age. The whole group was given “zero” for moral deportment! Only 5 were recognized as having good study habits, and four ranked as scholars. These 24 students were tardy a total of 65 times

Julia Lane remarked after teaching a 10 week summer session in 1859-60 that...”the mumps hurt school attendance. The school was not well furnished, even without textbooks.”

Abby Davis taught 19 students during the winter term. She was given credit by Supt. Daniel Quimby for “leading the students out of the thicket of ignorance.”

As with District #2, sometimes there was only one term a year. An example would be 1870-71 when Millie L. Philbrick taught an 8 week session. There were 20 students considered to be “some of the most advanced scholars in town.”

There was at least a fall term of 8 weeks in 1877, taught by Albert Flanders. He had 18 students and wrote the following comments at the end of the term:

No satisfactory results can be realized from eight weeks of school in a year, nor can interest of the average scholar be sustained. It seems unaccountable to me that a community with the amount of property as District #3 has, should have only forty dollars for school money. I found no remarkably quick scholars there, and no really dull ones.

Albert Goss taught the 10 week term in 1881-82. It was his first term of teaching. There were 12 students ranging in age from 5-19 years of age. The daily attendance average was 10 students. Three had perfect attendance and there were no tardies. Mr. Goss earned $116.00 and board. There were 17 visitors as well as Supt. McDaniel and the Prudential committee representative, Theophilus Goss. The families represented in District 3 during this period were Clough, Chase, Colby, George, Morgan, and Woodward.

No funds were being paid to District #3 in 1886. The amount of $13.33 was being paid to Sunapee, maybe for children from this district.

District #4

The exact location of District #4 is not certain, but it was probably Shad Hill. Edward Smith
who once lived on Shad Hill, believes a building across the road from his childhood home, on the right coming from 4A, was originally a school. It was somewhere in the northeastern corner of Springfield because two of the students attending the school were great aunts of this writer and known to have lived in the northeast part of town. When District #4 closed, their younger siblings and future nephews attended Maxfield School, District #13, not too far away.

Only the first register 1858-59 is known to have survived. Belinda Stevens taught a 7 week summer term. She was paid $14.00 including board. She was an experienced teacher and wrote about her students..."they are diligent and studious and manifest a good degree of interest"...There were no tardies either session which was unusual throughout the 14 districts. The families attending District #4 were Heath, Bailey, Maxfield, Peasley, Stevens, Carter, Babbitt and Prescott.

By 1859, the funds for District #4 and District #13 ($49.66) were combined and by 1862, the District #4 was dropped from the town records, while District #13, Maxfield, remained a school through 1948. Patsy Heath Caswell (A more in depth paper written about the Springfield schools, with references and footnotes is on file with the Springfield Historical Society.

Quote of the Quarter!

You have to be over 50 before you can stand to hear all those family tales, and by the time you might want to know, those who wanted to tell you and were not listened to, are dead...May Sarton, author died 1995

Late Developing News:

Plans are underway for a display at Springfield's Rt. 89 rest stop. The towns of Springfield, Grantham, and Croydon will each have a 3'x4' display board. Ella Reney has been the coordinator. Thanks to Stephen Klein and Muriel Tinkham for representing the Springfield Historical Society and the Libbie Cass Library.