



# Spinnings

**Chesterfield Historical Society Newsletter**

**Number 27**

**SPRING 2010**

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**There are only 18 of Martha Dodd Potter's Spofford Lake books left for sale. Don't miss this opportunity to get your copy of this very popular book.**

**Did you get your 2010 Historical Society Calendar? There are still some available for \$6.00 at the Library or the Historical Society. They include some great photos and other useful information.**

**Among the items found stored in the Spofford Village Hall/Fire Station attic were 5 sets of historic backdrops, scenery for plays. These are very impressive and huge and we have had them photographed and assessed. We were given an estimate of \$1,000 to have them cleaned, re-rolled and bagged. The new owners of the old fire station are storing them. We also hope to have a corner of the hall for a display and information on the mills that had been important to the village in earlier times when Spofford was known as Factoryville, Chesterfield Factory, or Factory Village. AND, we are pleased that the state has installed the historic marker with information of the Pierce/Hopkins mill at the corner of Joslin and Rte. 9A.**

**Pam Street Walton was a recent visitor to the Chesterfield Historical Society and has given us information, early photos and news articles from a Brooklyn paper about the Brooklynites Colony on Spofford Lake. She recalled lake and town water skiers and told a story handed down of a group of Brooklynites who had an outing in Walpole and saved Park Hill Meetinghouse with a bucket brigade when they saw smoke in the building on their way home.**

**We continue to assist with researching family trees. Some recent requests were for the Davis, Wetherbee and Smith families, among others.**

The Historical Society is a busy spot on Thursday mornings. We've been pleased to have the help of Peg Fegley, Carol Riendeau and Lorraine Scrivani, along with Marty Potter, Mary Maxwell, Neil Jenness and Audrey Ericson. It's an exciting place to be on Thursday mornings between 9:30 – 12 noon. Also, we are open on Sundays from 2 – 4 P.M with one person on duty. One of our current projects is the updating of our cemetery book.

#### **DO YOU KNOW?**

- that Chesterfield once had a jail? Where was it located and where is it now?
- that Chesterfield and Brattleboro shared the expense of the first bridge across the Connecticut River between those towns? What was the total cost? What year was it built?
- what award the 1937 iron bridge between Brattleboro and Chesterfield received and what Bridge shared the same honor, but in a different class.
- on what road schoolhouse #2 was located? We were thrilled to come across an old photo of that school.
- the three names for one steamer on the lake?
- what used to be located where Camp Spofford is now?
- what large structure stood on the old foundation stones on the left hand side of Joslin St.?
- the year and model of the old car on the cover of our 2010 calendar?

The answers to all these questions and other interesting facts can be found in our 2010 Calendar.

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board has met on the last Tuesdays of January and March to conduct business. We are pleased to welcome two new members to our board, Glenn Chickering and Dave Smith, two Chesterfield natives, who were elected to the board at our annual meeting in October. Other members include: John Hudachek, Leslie Nicholas, Bill Tyler, Ray Hutchins, Skip White, Roland Vollbehrr, Jean Hanson, Monique Antaya, Neil Jenness and Audrey Ericson.

#### **HELP WANTED**

We are in need of someone to mount Charles Thompson's cobbler tools to his bench board to make a more interesting display and to save room. Also photos of the cemetery stones of Levi Mead and Moses Smith have been requested.

#### **LOOKING FOR YOUR MEMORIES AND PHOTOS OF THE TOWN HALL**

We have spent several years researching and collecting information and gathering photos for a monograph (booklet) about our very special town hall. It is our aim to have it completed this year. If you have photos and/or special memories of that building, please share them with us. We would like to have some photos of the interior of the town hall as well as

outside photos showing the annex addition, old jail and hearse house to help us complete our booklet.

Of particular interest to us would be some interior photos of the hall decorated for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduations as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents always do a fabulous decorating job on various themes. Does anyone have any old photos or posters of the Brattleboro Summer Theatre productions that were put on at Chesterfield Town Hall at one time? We've seen the hall look spectacular for wedding receptions and other events and we would love to have photos of any of these special events. They can be sent to the Historical Society (PO Box 204, Chesterfield, NH, 03443) or call Audrey Ericson (363-8856) or Neil Jenness (363-8018).

### WOULD YOU BELIEVE?

Old town reports can make for some very interesting reading. Here are a couple nuggets from 1932:

--- *General expenses of highway department, including watering troughs, \$102.07*  
(Yes, watering troughs. For the horses, you know. Learned there was one on Poor Rd. and one at Brook St. and Main St. in West Chesterfield – among other locations.)

Here's one you won't read today:

--- *Report of the School Nurse*

*37 pupils were underweight (out of 127 pupils examined)*

Also, this item under School Finances:

*Chesterfield, in common with many other towns, has, during the past few years, experienced an increase in school membership. This is largely the result of unemployment in neighboring cities of this and other states, which has compelled many families to move into the rural communities. (from 87 pupils in 1929 to 126 pupils in 1933).*

### BRIDGE BEAUTIFICATION UPDATE

The Chesterfield Arch Bridge Beautification and Preservation Society recently held its first meeting of 2010. Progress is definitely being made regarding efforts of the committee to make the bridge an attractive area for residents to use and enjoy. Last summer six planters of flowers were placed on the bridge as well as some bird houses. This year United National Foods of Chesterfield donated four attractive stone benches which were placed on the bridge on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

The Society is now officially a New Hampshire non-profit corporation and is in the process of obtaining their tax exempt status (501c(3)). Work is also in progress to have the bridge placed on the National Historic Register. There are only four arch bridges like our steel bridge left on the Connecticut River in NH, consequently it is important to preserve this piece of history.

The committee is currently looking forward to the Justice Harlan Fiske Stone dedication of the bridge which will take place on September 12. A plaque commemorating the life achievements of Justice Stone, who was born in Chesterfield in 1872, will be placed on the bridge at this dedication. Watch for more information about this celebration later in the summer.

Everyone is invited to stroll (or bike) across the bridge and enjoy the view of the beautiful Connecticut River as well as the beginning of our bridge beautification project. For anyone interested in joining our committee, we meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 P.M. at the Riverside Hotel in West Chesterfield, right next to the bridge.

### LET'S CELEBRATE

We will be having a celebration to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the settling of Chesterfield (1761-2011). Does anyone have ideas as to what we could do to make this a special event for our town?

We would love to have some volunteers to help us organize this event. Contact Audrey Ericson (363-8856) or Neil Jenness (363-8018) if you are willing to help.

### DVDS AVAILABLE

DVD copies of the Madame Sherrie lectures by Richard and Bill Mitchell and Fritz Wetherbee's tribute that appeared on New Hampshire Crossroads are available at the Chesterfield Historical Society, the Chesterfield Library and the Brattleboro Library. Also available is a "Town of Spofford" by Bud Guyette.