OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The Historical Society’s Annual Meeting will be on Wednesday, October 23 at 6:00 PM at the Spofford Fire Station. There will be a covered dish supper (please bring a main course, salad or dessert to share) followed by an informative program: The History of Estey Organs by Dennis Waring. You do not need to be a member of the Chesterfield Historical Society to attend, everyone is welcome.

We have two positions available on our Board of Directors. If you are interested, please see Neil Jenness. We hope you can join us on October 23.

STONE HOUSE TAVERN UPDATE

If you haven’t read the special report on the Stone House Tavern by James Garvin, stop by the historical society and do so. James, a renowned architectural historian and preservationist, recently documented all the unique and remarkable features of the Stone House Tavern in a special report entitled Report on the Pierce Tavern.

Securing the building from the elements is the next goal…called Phase I. Bricks have fallen from the chimneys and the slate roof needs work. Doors and windows also need restoration. All this work means funds must be raised, so an LCHIP grant application for $310,595 (requiring half in matching funds) was submitted in June.

Matching funds will be secured from other grants and private donations. Expect an appeal letter if you have not already received it…and know that 100% of the CHS Board has generously contributed to the Phase I campaign!
Other grants from foundations that allow their funds to be used as matching funds are also being sought. For example, a $1000 grant for this purpose was awarded in July to the Chesterfield Historical Society (CHS) by More Than a Thrift Store (on Ralston St. in Keene), a nonprofit that gives its profits to other nonprofits.

Sadly, two large maples near the Stone House have been removed by the Department of Transportation (DOT). They were on State property. We will miss their color in October, but they were in poor health, and two large branches fell from one this summer during storms. Safety first!

Pam Walton traveled to Plymouth State University to explore the Foundation Directory Online database with grant writer Carmen Trafton. They met with Gary McCool, Coordinator of Reference Services at Plymouth State. CHS expects to submit applications for additional foundation grants in the fall.

While opening as a museum is still in the future, development of a children’s program has begun. Chesterfield teacher, Bettina Ramsey, visited Deerfield, the Historical Society of Cheshire County, and the Children’s Museum in Keene to gather ideas. This summer she wrote an active learning philosophy with themes and suggestions on how to develop these themes (for children preschool through grade 6). What a beginning! She will continue to develop the program next summer. CHS is lucky to have such an interested volunteer who is also an outstanding educator!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

The Historical Society would like to thank the following businesses for their valuable contributions to our Stone House Tavern restoration project:

Ames Performance
Green Mountain Bovine & Equine Clinic
Guyette Fire Protection
Howard’s Leather
Infinity Cleaning
More Than A Thrift Store
Over the River Day Spa
Pat Rawson Construction
Toadstool Bookstore
Wilcox Tree

We sincerely appreciate the participation of these businesses in our on-going efforts to make the changes needed to open the Stone House as a museum for the town of Chesterfield.
Ann Stokes was born in Moorestown, NJ in 1931; she was the great-granddaughter of Charles Pratt, a pioneer of the US petroleum industry and the founder of the Pratt Institute of Art in NYC.

She was a lifelong Quaker, attended Moorestown Friends School, Goddard College and was an active member of the Putney Friends Meeting House.

In 1959, she purchased property and build a home on Welcome Hill Rd. using stones from existing stone walls and barn boards purchased from NH barns. In 1970, she and several of her friends built studios on the property turning the 124 acres to an artist retreat for women with nature trails and inspiration from the isolation and wilderness. This all female crew’s work was captured in a book a Studio of One’s Own written by Ann.

Ann was a deep lover of nature, a poet and painter. She was an activist and philanthropist. She supported causes at both the local and national level. She often had gatherings of local politicians in her home and once ran for Sheriff in West Chesterfield. She lived her values and spoke her mind plainly. Her handwritten letters to newspapers, including the Times and the Washington Post were pointed and often poetic in their impact. Her poems were published in Ms. Magazine. She was passionate about politics, particularly women in politics, civil rights and gender equality. She proclaimed her lesbian identity with power, joy, pride and grace. Ann gave to many environmental and conservation organizations.

Her purchase of the Gulf Road property from Madame Sherri in 1965, was followed by a meeting with Madame and by a series of parties where Madame was remembered and honored. The Feast of the Wild Boar was attended by 200 invited guests to toast, roast and boast about Madame. This and several other parties included entertainment by Nina Simone and the Arthur Hall Dance Troop. By 1976, Ann Stokes granted the conservation easement of the 488 acres, and by 1991 donated the land to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests which was named the Madame Sherri Forest. This forest’s trail system includes a trail, Ann Stokes Loop, dedicated to her in 1998. This forest gift from Ann is enjoyed by hundreds each year for hiking, parties, weddings, films, ghost hunters and photographers.

Ann was active in her later years, painting and maintaining the studios for visiting artists. In 2006, she was the performer of the night on stage participating in the production of “Gay and Grey” at the Sandglass Theatre in Putney. During Ann’s last year she was surrounded by her friends and memories as she stoically succumbed to cancer in 2016.

The Welcome Hill Studios is her legacy, now run by the Ann Richardson Stokes, Inc. The studios offer creative women a beautiful, nurturing place in the woods to gather their thoughts and be inspired. Long and short stays are possible. [www.welcomehillstudios.org](http://www.welcomehillstudios.org)

Ann will always be remembered for her strong opinions, her passions, her generosity and her laughter.
THE STONE FAMILY VISIT

For a couple of days in June, the Chesterfield Historical Society (CHS) hosted Chief Justice Harlan F. Stone’s grandson (Harlan F. Stone II) and his family. The purpose of the visit was for Harlan Stone II to introduce his son’s family, especially his granddaughter, to the area, and the history of their family. Although Harlan’s grandfather, Chief Justice Stone, was raised in Massachusetts, his family and his wife’s family (Agnes Harvey) have deep roots that are interwoven into the fabric of Chesterfield’s history. Both the Stone and Harvey families arrived in Chesterfield in the 1770s. During their visit, the Stone descendants walked the bridge over the Connecticut River, which was named for Chief Justice Stone, explored their genealogy by visiting ancestral gravesites and homestead sites. They learned about their forefather’s accomplishments and first name origins. The visiting granddaughter was surprised that she had the same first name as her great, great grandmother. Besides exploring family history, the Stones toured CHS and the Stone House Tavern, to which they recently donated family heirlooms. In addition, they enjoyed a lesson in Sugaring Off at Stuart and John’s Pancake House as well as a pontoon boat ride on Lake Spofford that featured the lake’s history. The Historical Society hosted a potluck dinner in honor of the family. The Stone family also enjoyed lunching at Burdick’s in Walpole at the same time Ken Burns happened to be dining there! Being from out of state, our countryside impressed them, especially our “very green” tree lined roads, the view from Poocham Hill of the Green Mountains and Chesterfield Center. In all, the Stone family descendants learned that their family ties to Chesterfield run deeper than the historical sign in the center of town implies.

CHS VISITORS

John Richards, the Master Blacksmith at OUR old Stone Blacksmith Shop which is now located at Storrowtown in West Springfield, MA, and his wife, Maureen, a Storrowtown docent, spent an exciting morning with us in August. They were very interested in the history and information we shared with them, and they shared photos and information of their shop in Storrowtown. In 1930, the shop which stood beside 556 Rte. 63 in Center Village was moved, stone by numbered stone, to the new site. They would very much like to have a site sign erected at its original location here. We received appreciation gifts from them that John had made in the stone blacksmith shop-2 candlesticks, a trivet, and a can opener. And...we learned that our 1882 Randall’s History of Chesterfield is now available in paperback as Maureen sent us a copy.

AND, the following Sunday two great granddaughters of Charles Ebenezer Andrews, who was the blacksmith at our stone blacksmith shop around 1900 visited CHS and we shared articles and information with them.

AND, more recently, a woman interested in our blacksmiths and that stone blacksmith shop visited and we again shared our information with them.

A couple from Carver, MA spent a morning with us at CHS looking for information on our accelerated spinning wheel heads which were manufactured almost exclusively in our town. She showed us how to thread our spinning wheel and explained how much faster the wheelheads
made the task of spinning.

Our 2020 Calendars are at the press and will be available in a few weeks. The photos include several lake photos including a much earlier photo of the Pine Grove Springs Golf Course and the hotel farm (now Tower Light Inn), a Winky Wall painting selected as a favorite by our volunteers, and others of historical interest.

Five 8th grade students spent an hour with us one morning. One of the boys is a great grandson of Bruce Gauthier and was interested to find Bruce’s photo and service record in our Korean War collection.

Several volunteers spend a morning with the executive director of Ann Stokes’ Estate. We now have some great photos to add to our Madame Sherri Collection.

AUDREY’S RECIPE FOR NUTTY CRACKER DELIGHTS

(This Recipe Originated From Pat Dittrich)

42 Club Crackers
½ cup sugar
½ cup butter
1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup slivered almonds

Place crackers in a single layer on foil lined 15 x 10 x 1” cookie sheet
In saucepan over medium heat melt butter and add sugar. Bring to boil and cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add vanilla. Pour over crackers. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes. Remove from pan immediately.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

The following are excerpts from an article by Lois Bradstreet who was raised in Spofford Village.

My parents moved to Church Street in Spofford Village in the mid-1950s from Long Island. They bought and restored the historic Damon house...Because exchanging visits at the homes of my peers wasn’t especially common, I entertained myself. I was a naturalist at a young age. Often I would observe, catch and release frogs and salamanders in the verdant pond behind the Post Office...I would explore the banks of Partridge Brook and the caves in rocks along the
Westmoreland Rd. hill...In warm weather, we went to our cottage at the lake for weekend overnights or weekday afternoons for a swim.

We were entertaining ourselves all day long outdoors in the winter too. We used Allen’s hill as our personal ski resort. An old wooden door served as a ski jump and we made a slalom course and a downhill course...Hours were spent digging forts and tunnels and igloos under the large accumulated piles at the head of the driveway. We played in the snow all day and woolen outdoor clothing was always drying next to the kitchen stove.

The Post Office was inside the General Store when we first moved into town and Mrs. Arthur Post was postmistress. Retrieving the last afternoon mail gave us an excuse to walk to the store and sit on the porch edge watching the world go by...The store had a comprehensive stock of penny candy, a good treat for the kids with limited pocket money.

Walking and bike riding around and around the center of the village, to the channel, along Rt. 9-A, and to our cottage, this was my entertainment. TV was not an option because we only got three snowy, barely visible, black and white channels and were allowed only limited time in front of the TV to watch Mickey Mouse Club or American Bandstand.

One thing that sticks in my mind about growing up in Spofford was how true the quote about taking a village to raise a child because I felt the village helped raise me. Everyone knew everyone all around the village and beyond. All the dads were volunteer firefighters. All the moms were in the Ladies Auxiliary and learned homemaking skills mornings in the firehouse from the visiting Cooperative Extension Service staff. We worked along beside all the moms as we waitressed during the fire department’s steamed clam suppers, the maple sugar on snow supper and church’s ham and bean suppers.

We all attended the Methodist Church and all parents were members of the Grange.

There was only one policeman in town...he knew each and every one of us, knew to which parents we belonged and was one of the village people who watched over us...It was my sense that Spofford Village in the 1950s and early 60s was very “mom, home and apple pie-ish.” For that I am grateful. I think how different the world might be today if every child grew up safe, secure and had this advantage.

READ MORE OF LOIS’ GROWING UP IN SPOFFORD VILLAGE, COME IN TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND READ HER ENTIRE ARTICLE. WE ARE OPEN THURSDAYS 9:30-NOON AND SUNDAY 2-4 P.M.
In the 19th century, Harry Thayer Kingsbury enjoyed building and constructed several steamboats for his family’s use at their summer cottage on Lake Spofford. The Allegretto sank sometime around 1887. Annette Spaulding, a frequent diver in Lake Spofford, recovered some of its artifacts. On June 11, 2019, she presented the Chesterfield Historical Society with its anchor.