

Moultonborough History – Old Newspaper Research – February 2001

by Jane Rice

Now that the holidays are over, folks who are involved in the Town History project should have some free time to work on their research. The Historical Society was happy to receive copies of old pictures of Westwynde Farm, courtesy of Cristina Ashjian, towards the project. Westwynde was purchased by the Vappi family from the estate of Thomas Plant in 1941, but the homestead goes back into the 1800's, and we hope to learn more about its history.

I have been looking at old newspapers for articles concerning forgotten Moultonborough news of the past, or more contemporary details on events that we do know of. It is a very time-consuming process, as it is necessary to look through many pages of newspaper or microfilm to find Moultonborough items, since we have never had a town paper of our own. But occasionally a fragment of news is found, or something that raises a question for further investigation. For instance, who now remembers where the Hill Crest Tavern, El-ni-do restaurant, Fairmount Cottage, Red Oaks, "Klondyke" or H.F. Mansfield boarding house were? (See below for answers)

Moultonborough news appeared from time to time in the Meredith News, Granite State News, and occasionally in the Laconia Citizen. Weekly columns included news about who had company, or had traveled to Wolfeboro or Laconia, or even to Boston, who was not well and who was recovering, and news of the many clubs and organizations that were found in town in those days before television and cars to whisk us to the movies or the mall. Knights of Pythias, Pythian Sisters, Ladies' Aid, Grange, were well attended, with sometimes over a hundred people turning out for a play, supper, "social", or debate on a question such as "Is There A Higher Occupation Than Farming?" or "Poultry", a big turnout for a town of under 1,000 population.

Dart baseball was a popular indoor occupation the winter of 1937, with teams from various clubs and other towns participating in a league, and ice harvesting was still a winter task. What fun the children of the Corner School must have had

when teacher Annie Goss took them for a sleigh ride in the winter of 1902. And ice racing has roots that date back a century or so, when it was mentioned that Herbert Richardson and Dr. Lovering had plowed a trotting track on Berry Pond for their horses.

Instead of automobile accidents, horse accidents were reported in those days, along with a nice Jersey heifer struck by lightning. We still have a few cattle in town, but it's been quite a few years since anyone could write of men going to Gilford to drive home cows they had purchased, as reported in the Granite State News of 1900. Azilla Berry was in the fore-front of modern transportation in that year, when a "new Wheel" was purchased, presumably a new bicycle. Steamboat service picked up passengers from the landing on Long Island on a daily schedule. Crime was a part of the town scene even then, with re-ports of attempted murder, against Moses Witham in 1901, prosecution for snaring partridges illegally, escape of prisoners held for trial, and groceries stolen from a wagon while shop-ping in Meredith. Fire struck East Moultonborough in '01 when the Shannon and Morrison houses burned, and in 1937 when the Percy Kelley sawmill at the foot of Lake Kanasatka went up in flames, which the news correspondent of the day looked on as the removal of an eyesore from the land-scape.

The Town History Project would be glad to have volunteers who would like to help out with the process of reviewing old newspapers and searching for items concerning Moultonborough. Please call Jane Rice at 476-5108 (home), or at the Moulton-borough Library, 476-8895, if you can travel to Wolfeboro, where the Granite State News is available on microfilm at the public library, or the Laconia library for the Citizen, or Meredith, where the Meredith News is available at the Meredith Public Library in hard copy (requires making copies on the photocopier).

(Answers to Questions.)

I posed a question in the Meredith News of where some of the old boarding houses were located, that I saw mentioned in old news-paper clippings, and of course, Adele Taylor and Marion Goodwin were the ones with the answers. Back in the 1930's, Mabel and Henry Boyle owned what is currently Maurice's Family Restaurant, also known as the

Country Fare, Berry Pond Inn, and Moultonboro Inn, that I can remember. When the Boyles had it, it was Hill Crest Tavern, and what is now the Holland Hill House was Hill Crest Farm, and the former Larrabee place, also on Route 109 North, Hill Crest Annex, which had rooms for visitors. The "Fairmont" was at Green's Corner, and Mansfield's was on Route 109, probably where Pat Carrasco lives.

The "El-ni-do" restaurant was where Dr. Hope lives, and Ethel Carter was famous there for her fried clams; and there were also three overnight cabins. There are still more details to be learned, but this is a great start on learning about some the businesses related to the end of the farming era and the beginning of the era of "summer people" being the main industry of the town.