

Our "Society" - A History by Atty. Keith Nelson

(NOTE: This was Keith's presentation given at the monthly meeting, April 8, 2002)

I talked to Adele Taylor and Bob Lamprey and then, with great trepidation I entered the files here at the Historical Society. Aside from allergic spasms of sneezing from the dust and mildew, I actually was able to dig through and locate minutes of meetings, beginning February 10, 1958 through 1963. After 1963 there's a gap. They pick up again in 1972 and I reviewed some of these as well.

As I imagine it, it was a cold December 1957. There was a long discussion between many of the self-appointed historians of the town. Most likely they were each calling into question the accuracy of each other's memories. Upon discovering that these heated discussions might be an excellent way to keep warm on cold blustery nights, these Moultonboro troublemakers decided to form a Historical Society and document their memories, be it real or imagined.

The idea of forming the Society was publicized January 9, 1958. They set February 10th as their first meeting date and the call went out to the townspeople to come join them at the Grange Hall at 8 o'clock p.m.. (The members must have been younger then and could stay up a 1/2 hour later.)

Bickford acted as Secretary and Bob Lamprey was appointed temporary chairman. Somebody had already procured a constitution and by-laws of the Meredith Historical Society, deleted the word Meredith and replaced it with Moultonboro: spelled MOULTONBORO, (without the UGH). These documents were adopted as the group's own.

Membership fee of \$2.00, \$1.00 for those joining after October 1st. \$25 lifetime. Meetings 2nd Monday of each month.

A slate of officers was presented. The officers were probably elected in much the same manner as today. Everyone was afraid to raise their hand and afraid to leave the room, lest they be elected. And they probably accepted in much the same manner ... with great reluctance. From what I can gather, that's how we ended up with the our first officers in 1958:

President - Hollis Eaves

Vice President - Mildred Larson

Secretary - Gladys Bickford

Librarian - Mark Riley

Historiographer - Edith Sturtevant (as opposed to Historian?)

Directors - Horace Richardson Lester Taylor Robert Lamprey

There is no mention of a Treasurer in the minutes, but it is presumed that Nina Moulton was elected because she gave reports at later meetings.

Instead of limiting their charter membership to just the 16 people that were there, they decided to let anyone join and be a charter member if their dues were paid by May 12, 1958.

The second meeting, in March 1958 was held in the home of Leon Sturtevant.

(I thought it was interesting to note that the minutes report: "After discussion, a map project was decided upon. The map to show historical data as to original homes, rangeways, economic life, cemeteries, etc." Aren't we nearing completion of the map of historical homes today?)

They also decided to try to establish a more permanent meeting place, perhaps at the Library

You can't have any organization without a lot of committees, so they formed five that day. A Map Committee, an Earlier Economic Life Committee, an Old Homes & Early Settlers Committee, a Road & Rangeways Committee and a Cemeteries Committee. They left that meeting with a great sense of accomplishment.

At the April meeting at the Library, they realized that in March they neglected to form the most important committee of all, the Refreshment Committee.

Another committee, Schools and Churches, was created at the May 12th meeting, and perhaps realizing that they already had 7 committees and only 26 paid members, they voted to extend the time for charter membership to one year from the date of organization. An 8th committee was formed to contact older members of the community to try to bring them Society meetings.

I guess in anticipation of great success in recruiting new members, they also decided to look for a larger place to meet.

The June 9th minutes brought forth the name of yet another two committees, one for Publicity and one for Membership. At what appears to be Gilbert Wiggins' first meeting, he was appointed chair of the Membership Committee, but told that he had to get his own members for his committee.

Helen Sturtevant Matthews, who was very active in the Society, suggested at the July meeting, attended by 13 people, that they have a map with all the present homes, especially year round residents.

For scheduling their October meeting, it appears that they had a similar problem that we face today: Sandwich Fair. So it was held a day later on a Tuesday. It appears from the minutes that there was some frustration that with so many committees, not too much was getting done. Fortunately, in this case no committee was formed to address this issue.

The Jan 12, 1959 meeting of 10 people reported 48 members qualifying for charter membership. Somehow the charter member list was expanded to 54, which is the number you see in the book today. Read list -

Obviously, feeling flush with members, a Nominating Committee was formed. The President, Hollis Eaves, asked that cards be sent out announcing the next meeting and stated that he expected reports from all the committees at that time.

The 1st anniversary meeting on Feb 9, 1959 included a discussion among the 26 members present about the annual meeting date. It seems that because they had used the Meredith Historical Society's Constitution and By-laws that Moultonboro's annual meeting was also April as copied from their Constitution and By-laws, rather than in February, as they may have thought. On a more serious matter, refreshments were still a problem and it was duly voted that the Board solve this problem. Despite the

presidential edict from the prior month, no reports were forthcoming from the committees at the meeting.

The March 1959 meeting, brought forth some amendments: to the Constitution to include the Vice President as a member of the Executive Committee. (This was later amended in April to also include the Secretary.) And filling the auditing committee with the three non-officer members of the Executive Committee (i.e. the Directors). Also, 2 plans were announced that we follow to this day: A complete program for the meetings for the ensuing year be arranged AND a list of those members in charge of refreshments was presented for each of the meetings the next year.

President - Gilbert Wiggins

Vice President - Mildred Larson

Secretary - Mildred Edwards

Treasurer - Nina Moulton

Librarian - Adele Taylor

Historiographer - Edith Sturtevant

Directors - Horace Richardson Lester Taylor Robert Lamprey

April 13, 1959 meeting: May 11, 1959 the Society began meeting in the fire station. The fire station had a good wall for historical maps.

THE TOWN HOUSE

I don't see any record of it in the Society's minutes, but on the March 8, 1960 Town warrant an Article was included by request "To see if the Town will vote to allow the Old Town House to be used as a meeting place and also for the preservation and display of historical records and items of historical interest pertaining to the town and designate the Moultonboro Historical Society as custodian." It was approved. It may have helped that Bob Lamprey, Peter Larson and Frank McIntire were the selectmen and all members of the historical society. (As a side note the town budget at the time was \$221,740.01, I think this year's [2002] was in excess of \$ 9 million.)

Apparently, despite the vote, the Town House was far from ready for occupancy. In the July 1960 Society meeting, it was stated that the Selectmen felt that weather proofing and chimney repair needed to be done before any interior work could be done.

Since the outlook for occupancy of the Town House was not imminent, the idea of a fireproof file was brought up to be kept at the fire house. A committee was later formed. (The purchase of the file was approved upon the recommendation of the committee nine months later on Feb 13, 1961, with the price not exceed to \$60.00, and displayed at the March meeting (Cost: \$40.00))

The following information was found concerning the Town House in the ensuing months:

November 1960 - much repair work needed to be done on Town House.

Late April 1961 Selectmen offer to meet with Building Committee June 1961 - Building Committee meeting to set time to meet with Selectmen.

July 1961 - Bldg Committee met with Selectmen and will inspect it soon with contractor Fred Davis.

Nov 1961 Meeting with contractor must be postponed several months (Committee members out of town)

Feb 28, 1962 Letter from then president, Wilfred Riley, to Cora Roth, VP. "Every effort should be made to keep the appearance of both the inside and outside as nearly original as possible. If for example, there was originally a wood stove or furnace in the center then, I think, it should be there now even tho not used for heat."

May 14, 1962 - Wilfred Riley contacted Board of Selectmen about repairs.

Jan 14, 1963 - Still at Firehouse.

Apr 10, 1963 - I found a letter from Leon Sturtevant to Frank Jones, asking him to serve on committee to prepare plans for completing the repair and refurbishing of the Town House, together with Fred Davis and Horace Richardson.

Library - Through at least Jan 14, 1963

Firehouse - 1962-1963 (Average attendance 23 people)

Annual meetings - Vestry at Methodist Church

Summer of 1962 displayed items in The Country Store (Richard St. Clair)

1963 to 1972 - Gap in minutes

Jan 10, 1972 - 1st reference to a meeting in the Town House is May 1972, with Ernest Davis presiding as President.

May 13, 1974 - That the building needed repairs: reglazing and painting of windows, a light of glass,

Various Meeting Locations:

SCHOOL HOUSE

May 14, 1973 - Idea of obtaining School house first discussed.

Jun 11, 1973. Looking at options for land upon which to place School House.

GRANGE HALL

Apr 14, 1975 Idea of acquiring Grange Hall first discussed.

Aug 11, 1975 Looking into legal advice to take over Grange Hall.

Dec 1975 Town investigated the Grange Hall for its own use and found that its use would have damaged the design of the bldg.

Mar 8, 1976 - Voted to let the Grange know within 60 days if the Society wanted the building.

Apr 12, 1976 - Grange looking to reestablish itself, thereby removing the Grange Hall from consideration.

INCORPORATION

In September 1959, Society received what appears to be a threatening letter from the IRS stating that it would be taxed as a corporation at corporate rates, if an application for tax exemption was not made. Nothing appears to have been done at that time, probably because we had no income to speak of.

October 1961 - Philip Guyol, Director of NH Historical Society Spoke to group and recommended incorporation.

November 10, 1961 - Secretary was instructed to write to Secretary of State for information on incorporation.

December 11, 1961 - Leon Sturtevant gave a report and proposed new bylaws. Consensus of meeting was the society should incorporate, but investigate procedure.

March 1962 - Annual meeting month changed from April to January. Under the new by-laws the name was stated be Moultonborough Historical Society (note the UGH)

March 1962 - Leon Sturtevant got information from Attorney Pauline Merrill of Bristol about incorporating. Didn't see any advantage in incorporating, unless the society had substantial funds or was going to buy a building. Oct 4, 1976 Members again raised questions about tax exempt status of Society.

April 8, 1985 - The By-laws, as revised by a committee of Ernest Stevens, Mason Stone, Jr., Adele Taylor, Martha Oliver and Frances Stevens, were accepted by the Society. Presumably, one of the reasons they revised the by-laws was to increase the annual membership rate to \$3.00. It appears that they hadn't changed for 27 years. I guess that they weren't indexed for inflation.

Aug 15, 1994 - The decision was made to purchase what is now the Lamprey House Museum. The NH statute was unclear. It allowed unincorporated associations to hold real property, as in a gift, but did not contemplate an unincorporated association purchasing real property or for the granting of a mortgage on the property. Therefore, the Society was incorporated Sep 26, 1994.

Nov 10, 1994 - Because of time constraints and to minimize the chance of any disruption of the regular operation of the Society, the 1985 Bylaws were adopted by the newly formed corporation, to the extent that they did not conflict with the Articles of Incorporation. When the decision was reached to have the Society qualify for tax exemption under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), the Articles of Agreement were amended to conform to

IRS requirements.

Dec 14, 1994 - The Lamprey House was purchased. I'll leave how we acquired the barn that was attached to the Lamprey House, to others.

The By-laws were later revised by Committee of Ron Baker, Barbara Kelley, Dee Hamke and Keith Nelson, and accepted on.

That's where we've been and where we are now.