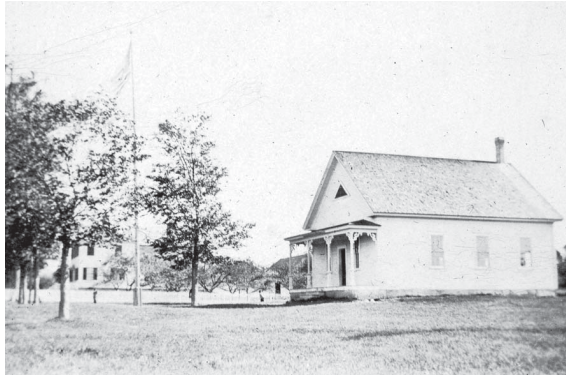




Epsom Historical Association NEWSLETTER

Catch up to the Past

July 2008 No. 3



Sunday July 13

“East Street Revisited”

The story of Epsom's first settlers remains one of the most popular topics presented by the Historical Association. The journey continues with discussion of the early history of our town including particular families and individuals, homes and businesses, local government and other surprising notes of interest. The program will be held at the site of Epsom's early center, at the McClary Cemetery and will conclude with an ice cream social, 2:00 PM. Bring a lawn chair.
NOTE: Use Echo Valley Farm Road off Route 107 to access the cemetery.

2008 Epsom Historical Association Officers

President - Harvey Harkness
Vice President - Phil Yeaton
Secretary - Elsie Fife
Treasurer - Penny Yeaton
email - epsomhistory@aol.com

IN OUR ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Members of the Epsom Historical Association who provide their email addresses receive their newsletter via email. This electronic version is an expanded version which contains many more pages, photos and articles. If you wish to upgrade to this more complete version, please email epsomhistory@aol.com.

IN THIS EDITION:

**John Dolbeer Old Home Day Address 1899 -
Historical Sketch of the Town
Allen-Locke Family Bible**

ALLEN-LOCKE FAMILY BIBLE

FAMILY RECORD

Marriages

Lizzie G. Allen married Dec. 27th/59 by Rev. W.H. Ryder

To John S. Brickett

S. Amanda Allen married Jan. 10th 1865 by Rev. A.A. Minder

To George E. Emerson

Births

Isaac Allen Born Tamworth Sept. 29, 1782

Betsy Gilman Born Feb. 23rd 1790

Ira Allen Born Tamworth Jan 3rd 1812

Abigail Jonson Born Tamworth March 17th 1815

Stephen M.O. Allen Boston April 15th 1819

Betsy Gilman Allen Tamworth April 15th 1825

cont. Page 7

EPSOM CELEBRATION

The Old Homes Remembered with Appropriate Exercises

Historical Sketch of the town by

J.H. Dolbeer

Who can imagine the feelings that prompted those men, who one hundred and seventy five years ago, with their gun and axe, those inseparable companions of the successful pioneer, left their home by the sea and on foot, made their way through the unbroken forest to this wilderness?

Was it all a desire to make for himself a home – to secure a farm, to own property, or was there mingled with it a spirit of adventure – the hope of making some valuable discovery, the expectation of becoming famous?

Whatever may have been their ambitions, certain it is that they must have experienced trials, mishaps, danger and suffering that are difficult for us this late day to conceive of.

In tracing an historical sketch of Epsom, the material for making it sensational or thrilling is lacking, save as they come down to us in tradition or story, if we may except the captivity of Mrs. McCoy by the Indians.

The early history of the town was sadly neglected, the brief records of the town clerk and church scribe being absent – the only thing upon which the historian can safely rely.

A short historical sketch was published by the late Rev. Jonathan Curtis in 1823 which is valuable so far as it goes.

It is impossible to tell the exact date of the first settlement made in town, but somewhere about 1725, one William Blazo, a Frenchman, came here and commenced his home near where what is commonly known as the Old Center.

It is said of him that he was rather changeable in his plans and moved about from place to place, so much so, that in after years, it was frequently said of persons who were discontented with their lot and

were seeking unsuccessfully to better their conditions, that they had Blazo's row. It is also said that this Blazo was the first white person who died in town and the first who was buried in the old burying ground on the hill.

Following Mr. Blazo came the McCoy family who settled on Sanbury hill whose history of Indian trouble is familiar to all. The youthful Samuel Blake, frequently referred to as "Sergeant Blake" at the age of fifteen years was among the earliest settlers, settling upon the farm now owned and occupied by D.G. and J.A. Chesley, descendants of said Blake.

Some of you may be interested in the charter or grant of the town which is as follows:

George, By the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith.

"To all People to whom these presents shall come: Greeting:

"Know ye, we, of our especial knowledge and meer motion, for the due encouragement of settling a new plantation, by and with the advice and consent of our council, have given & Granted, and by these Presents, as far as in us lies, do give and grant unto all such of our loving subjects as were inhabitants and free holders in the year one thousand seven hundred and twenty-three, in our town of New Castle and in the Parish of Greenland, both within our Province of Newhampshire, in New England, to be divided among them in proportion to their Respective Rates, which they paid in the year 1723 aforesaid, one tract of Land to be laid out at the head of Nottingham and Northward of land formerly granted to the children of Saml. Allen, decsd., the same to be six miles in Breadth and four miles in Depth, or in such other form as the land ungranted, in that place will admit, so as it contains the same Quantity of Land, and the same to be a town corporate by the name of Epsom to the Pursons aforesaid forever. To Have and to Hold and said Tract of Land to said Grantees and their heirs and assigns forever upon the following conditions:

"1st. That they build twenty Dwelling Houses and settle a Family in each within the term of four years, and break up three acres of Ground for each Settlement, and plant or sow the same within four years.

“2d. That a house be built for the Publick worship of God within the term of six years.

“3d. That One Hundred acres of Land be Reserved for a parsonage, one hundred acres for the first minister of the Gospell and one hundred acres for the Benefit of a School. Provided, Nevertheless, that the Peace with the Indians continue during the aforesd conditions.

“Rendering and paying therefor to us, our heirs and successors, or such other officer or officers as shall be appointed to Receive the same, the annual quit rent or acknowledgement of one pound of good merchantable Hemp in sd town, on the first day of Decembr yearly, for ever, if demanded.

“Reserving also unto us, our heirs and successors, all mast trees growing on said Land, according to an act of Parliment made and provided in that case.

“And for the better order, Rule and Government of the said Town, we, by these Presents, Grant for us, our heirs and successors, unto the aforesd Proprietors, and those that shall inhabit the said Town, that yearly and every year, upon the first Wednesday in May, they may meet at any place within our Province of Newhampshire aforesd, until the settlement of the aforesd Town is perfected, and afterward in the said town, to elect and chuse by the Major part of them constables, Select men and all other Town officers within our aforesd Province have & enjoy, and we appoint our Loving Subjects, Theodore Atkinson, Joshua Foss & Capt. Samuel Weeks to be the selectmen to manage the affairs of the said town for the Present year and untill others are chosen in their Room by the aforesd Propriors.

“In Testimony whereof we have caused the seal of our said Province to be herewith annexed.

“Witness, John Wentworth, Esq., our Lt. Governor and Commander in Chief in and over our said Province, at our town of Portsmouth, the eighteenth day of May, in the Thirteenth year of our Reign, anno Domini 1727.

“J. WENTWORTH.

“By order of his Hon. The Lt. Gov., with advice of the counsel.

“RICHD. WALDRON, *Clerk.*

“Province of N hampshire: Recorded in ye 18th Book, pages 479 & 480, this 29th of June, 1732.

“JOSPH PIERCE, *Recorder.*

“Pd 2s 6d.”

By an act of the Provincial Legislature, passed February 21, 1778, the time holding the annual meeting was changed from the first Wednesday of May to the third Wednesday of March.

The first meeting of the proprietors was held at the ferry house in New Castle, Dec. 4, 1727.

It was first voted that the moderator be chosen by holding of hands, the place not being convenient for writing. At this meeting a committee was chosen to run the line of the town and have five shillings for their work.

On the 15th of May, 1728, at a meeting held at the same place the regular officers were elected and another committee, James Randall, Daniel Lunt and James Seavey, were chosen to run out the bounds of the town and do it as soon as possible, and the selectmen were directed to raise thirty pounds upon the proprietors to defray the charges.

On the first and second days of May following the survey was made by the above committee who reported as follows:

“We, whose names are underwritten, being hired by the selectmen of Epsom to lay out the said township of Epsom according to the Charter, have laid it out and bounded it as follows, viz: Beginning at Nottingham head line four miles north westward from Chester line at a maple tree marked with letter N on the eastside for Nottingham and Epsom on the west side for Epsom, from thence running west-northwest four miles to a pitch pine tree which is one mile west from Suncook river, from thence running northeast and by north six miles to a tree westward of the Suncook river from thence running east-southeast four miles to a hemlock tree standing by Nottingham head line by a pond called Epsom pond, with several marked by it; from thence running southeast and by south by Nottingham head line six miles to the maple tree first mentioned.

Laid out and bounded this first and second day of May, one thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine, by us,

Joshua Foss

Daniel Lunt

Jedediah Weeks, Committee

Edward Hall, surveyor

At a later meeting it was voted "that the selectmen procure some industrious person to view the said land and to see where and in what method to lay out their lots and where to settle the town and to do what they shall think proper for advancing the settling of the town aforesaid and to raise money sufficient to defray the charges thereof upon the proprietors."

In May, 1732, it was voted "that there be laid out at some convenient place in the town suitable for building a meeting house and for settling twenty-one families accordingly one thousand acres in fifty-acre lots, one lot to be given to every person who will settle and will fulfill the charter so far as relates to building a house and clearing three acres of land," and it was further voted "that thirty acres be added to each of the twenty men mentioned in the above vote to be laid out in some other part of the town as the proprietors shall think best, beside the fifty acres above mentioned to make up each man eighty acres."

At the proprietors meeting held at the house of Daniel Lunt in Greenland, May 22, 1732, the following twenty men drew their twenty lots, viz., James Seavey, Richard Goss, Thomas Berry, Daniel Lunt, Noah Seavey, William Lock, Samuel Dowst, Zach Berry, Eben Berry, Solomon Dowst, Samuel Wallis, William Wallis, John Blak, Josiah Foss, Simon Knowles, Paul Chapman, Joseph Lock, Jotham Foss, Jedediah Weeks and James Marden.

These several lots have since been known as the "home lots" and are situated upon both sides of the road leading from Deerfield past what is known as the old Center. Perhaps the highway may have been changed a little since the lots were laid out, and I understand they extended, or what is now Deerfield, to just west of the town house. There are certain questions that have arisen in my mind in reference to these settlements. It seems by the record that there were twenty lots laid out and they were drawn by the above named twenty men, yet, we are told that

the parsonage lot, the school lot and the ministers lot, each to contain one hundred acres, according to the charter, were all included within this territory. It is also noticeable that none of this property is held at the present time by persons bearing the name of the original owner, nor by any of their descendants unless it be that the Chesley brothers are descendants of John Blake.

Several years ago the Suncook Valley Times of Pittsfield published sketches of Epsom and Epsom people from which I quote.

"The early proprietors and settlers of Epsom were of good English stock, though there was a small company of Scotch Irish from Londonderry who settled here in 1738. Among this number were the McClarys McGaffneys, Dickeys, Wallaces, Knoxes, etc."

Epsom was at that time a frontier town with a few scattering pioneers striving to find a local habitation and a name in these unbroken forests.

Theodore Atkinson, a wealthy land holder, was a leading spirit among the proprietors in inducing a few families to push a settlement so far in the woods. None of the adjoining towns were settled until many years afterwards. This was nearly thirty years before Chichester, Pittsfield or Barnstead were settled, twenty years before Concord received its present name, twenty years before Northwood and Deerfield were incorporated and thirty-six years before the Revolution.

The first settlement in the Suncook valley was made here and not a tree was cut between this and the Canadas, and not a clearing or friendly smoke or any signs of civilization to break the monotony of the unbounded forest or cheer the loneliness of the early settlers. Meager, indeed, are the record and traditions concerning these hardy foresters during these many years of border life before the Revolution. Nottingham fort was their nearest neighbor and asylum of safety. The Indians frequented the valley and the bears, wild cats, deer and catamount roamed through the forests undisturbed.

The proprietors built a blockhouse or garrison for refuge in case of danger. It was built near where Andrew McClary then lived, now the residence of

Joseph Lawrence. To this place of refuge Mrs. McCoy was hastening when captured by the Indians. Though the Indians were generally friendly, the inhabitants were greatly annoyed and the growth of the settlement slow and difficult.

During the French and Indian war, commencing in 1756, Epsom was a frontier town. The people lived in fear of the scalping knife and the tomahawk and suffered by the incursions of the prowling savages. Garrisons were established at Epsom, Beech street, Pembroke and a fort at Canterbury. Government frequently sent small detachments of troops up through this section scouting for the enemy and to protect and encourage the settlers. Capt. Andrew McClary was the leading man in this section in all military matters and rendered the colony efficient service during these perilous times.

In 1755 he applied to Governor Wentworth and obtained a company of troops to go in search of the Indians that committed the massacre at Salisbury. At another time he obtained a small company to aid in doing garrison duty at Epsom while the Indians were seen lurking around.

Of the families that were prominent in the affairs of the town in its early days the name of McClary stands foremost. For thirty-five years some member of that noted family served the town as one of its selectmen, representative from 1775 to 1797 and from 1810 to 1818, town clerk fifteen years, state senator ten years, the honorable John president of the Senate in 1784.

The Lockes appear in 1746, Frances Locke selectman from then to 1749, Ephraim from 1754 to 1776, perhaps not continuously but the greater part of the time, and later other members of the family till 1865.

Samuel Jackson served five years about 1770 and then nothing more is said about him.

From 1745 to 1765 the Libbey family were prominent – Samuel, John, Isaac and Isaac Jr.

About the same time one Nathan Marden was member of the board of selectmen and town clerk and his name also appears upon the church records frequently, but I can learn nothing further about him or his descendants.

About 1760 the Sanborns begin to take part in the affairs and from then until 1870, we find their name in the records. The first was Reuben, then Eliphalet, two brothers I take them to be, then Josiah selectman, then Frederick and Henry F. H.F. two, also representative. Another early officer was Col. Jeremiah Prescott, from which Prescott's bridge derives its name, then Thomas Babb, twenty years in office, Levi Brown six years, the Tripps - Richard, Jeremiah and Thomas. About 1804 Thomas D. Merrill appears and until 1875 was generally in office either as clerk, selectman or representative.

Dr. Samuel Morrill was town clerk from 1801 to 1819, and the records show him to be the right man in the right place, also selectman eight years.

Squire Hanover Dickey comes to notice about 1820 and Winthrop Fowler in 1824, and he and his descendants have been frequently honored by the citizens.

Then there were others who served shorter terms such as Capt. James Gray, Dr. David L. Morrill, afterward Governor of the State, William Ham, Levi Locke and alter his son Benjamin L., Eliphalet Wiggin, John Griffin, Nathan Bickford, Jonathan L. Cilley, James Martin and others.

From 1779 to 1800 there are several names that appear on the town records two or three times and then nothing more is said about them, and they are names with which we are not familiar at present.

One of these is Benjamin Goodin, as it appears in one place and in another it is Gooding, selectman four years. John Casey. Clerk from 1780 to 1784, a fine penman. Solomon Sutton serving both as clerk and selectman, Amos Morrill, selectman from 1790 to 1793. Who can tell where they live, what their occupation or where they went?

The record of this town in the wars in which this nation has been engaged is one of which we may justly be proud.

We have the names of thirty five of its citizens who did valiant service in gaining the Independence of this country.

Again I quote from another "The seven years war which closed in 1760 had completely aroused the

military spirit of the province and organizations with experienced officers had been maintained up to the time of the Revolution. A new regiment was then formed, the Twelfth comprising the towns of Nottingham, Northwood, Deerfield, Chichester and Pittsfield. “ “Coming events cast their shadows before.” The people were expecting a serious conflict.

The battle of Lexington on the 19th of April, 1775, sounded the tocsin to arms. Signals flamed from the hill tops and fleet messengers transmitted the news from town to town. The sturdy yeomanry of the Suncook Valley snatched their trusty fire locks and powder horns and started for the scene of hostilities with spirits as brave as ever animated a soldier and with hearts as noble and honest as ever throbbed in the cause of liberty and freedom.

They were governed by one common impulse and they came from blazed paths and crooked roads that wound through the forests and thickets. They were all known to each other as brothers and townsmen. Each soldier represented a household and they and their cause were commended to the protection of heaven at the morning and evening devotions in the service of the Sabbath.

The men from this section reached Nottingham square about 1 o’clock, where they found Captain Cilley and Dr. Dearborn with a company of about sixty men making with themselves about eighty men. There is much to be written concerning the achievements of this distinguished company and many of the able men composing it, but the most remarkable and thrilling incident in this connection was their famous march to Cambridge.

There is not a parallel in the annals of all the wars in this country and such wonderful powers of endurance by a whole company of men excites our surprise as their patriotism does our pride and admiration.

No other location can boast of sending braver hearts or tougher men to aid by their valor and perseverance in establishing the noblest republic that ever cheered and blest a prosperous people. This noble Spartan band opened a series of brilliant exploits by performing one of the most remarkable physical feats ever recorded in our nation’s history.

Dr. Dearborn gives an account of it and Bancroft a passing notice and tradition relates it from generation to generation, but it should be familiar to every son and daughter of New Hampshire as one of the brightest testimonials of our devotion to the cause of freedom and independence.

Accustomed as they were to life in the open air and trials of strength by long journeys, hunting, trapping and scouting, they knew little of fear or fatigue.

Leaving Nottingham square at 1 o’clock in the afternoon they pushed on at a rapid pace as if the destiny of the province or hopes the nation depended upon their alacrity or speed. At Kingston they took a double-quick or dog-trot, and followed it without a halt to Haverhill, crossing the Merrimack river in a ferry boat, at sunset, having made twenty-seven miles in six hours. But this is not all; they halted at Andover for supper and then started for a night march and on the morning of the twenty-first inst., at sunrise, there were paraded on Cambridge common, “spilling for a fight.”

Those from Epsom had traveled seventy miles in less than twenty-four hours and the whole company from Nottingham, fifty seven miles in less than twenty hours.

Did bone and muscle ever do better?

“That was the spirit of ’76. That was the kind of stuff the men were made of who lived in the Suncook Valley one hundred and twenty-five years ago.”

The record still farther reads: Andrew McClary, killed at Bunker Hill; William McCrillis, killed at Bunker Hill; Lieut. Andrew McGaffey, wounded at Bunker Hill; Weymouth Wallace, wounded at Bunker Hill; Adj. John McClary, died of a wound at Albany; Ozone Lock, killed at Bennington; Francis Locke, died at Chimney Point; Peter Pomp (an African) died at Valley Forge; Simon Sanborn, died at Chimney Point; Noah St. Clair, wounded at St. John.”

We find the record of forty-seven men who enlisted in the war of 1812, the most of them serving but sixty days.

In the War of the Rebellion, Epsom was well represented, but it was so recent that most of you are familiar with its details.

More than eighty men were credited to the town, while there were many others who were natives of this place who enlisted from other localities. Twenty or more of these brave men never returned, some killed on the field of battle, some dying in the hospitals from wounds or diseases and others against whose names are written missing or captured.

The population has varied with the passing years.

In 1767 the enumeration by the selectmen gives forty married men and forty married women, seventy-one boys under sixteen years, sixty six girls, two widows and fifteen unmarried men over sixteen years of age, a total of two hundred and thirty-nine.

In 1791 the population of the town was 799, in 1800 it was 1034, in 1810 it was 1156, in 1820 it was 1336, in 1830 it was 1418, the highest it has ever been. In 1840 it went down to 1205, in 1850 it gained to 1366, in 1860 it went back to 1216, in 1870 it dropped to 993, in 1880 down to 909 and in 1890 down still lower to 815, and I think the census of next year will keep it about where it was in the last.

Allen-Locke Family Bible cont.

ALLEN-LOCKE FAMILY BIBLE

FAMILY RECORD

Marriages

Samuel Locke Born Epsom Nov. 15th 1791
Lydia Buzzell, New Durham, NH May 28th 1789
George E. Lock Epsom May 31st 1810
Eliza M. Lock Born Epsom June 15th 1812
Harriet S. Lock Born Epsom Sept. 18th 1814
George E. Lock 2nd Born Epsom January 31st 1817
Mary Ann Lock Epsom June 4th 1819
Wm. M. Lock Born Epsom Aug. 18th 1821
Maria F. Lock Born Epsom Novem 4th 1823

Lydia D. Lock Born Concord, NH Jany 4th 1827
James J. Lock Born Dover NH April 9th 1832

Lizzie G. Allen married Dec. 27th/59 by Rev. W.H. Ryder
To John S. Brickett

S. Amanda Allen married Jan. 10th 1865 by Rev. A.A. Minder
To George E. Emerson

Births

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James J. Lock Born Dover NH April 9th 1832

Lydia Locke Little Lydia Born in Lowell June 31st 1853 Daughter of Wm. M. Locke

Aet of Ira Allen's family

Lydia A. Allen Born Dover NH March 12th 1832 age 10

Susan Amanda Allen Born January 3rd Dover NH 1835

Elisabeth Jonson Allen Born Meredith January 25th 1837

William Merrill Allen Born in Corinna, ME March 17th 1841

Harriet Maria Allen Born Corinna, ME October 8th 1842

Ida Blanche Allen Born June 22nd, 1855, Roxbury, Mass. Wed morn 6 ½ o'clock

Allen-Locke Family Bible cont.

Deaths

Elisabeth G. Allen Died January 4th 1845 @ 12 ½ o'clock P.M.
Isaac Allen Died May 3rd, 1856 @ 2 o'clock P.M.
Betsey S. Allen died July 13th 1865 at 3:20 P.M. n 75th year of her age.
Ida Blanche Allen died April 23rd, 1873 at 1 o'clock 45 minutes in the morning.
Ira Allen M.D. died Aug. 29th 1875 at 7 o'clock 30 minutes P.M.
Harriet Maria Allen Died Feb. 21st 1890 at 2:20 o'clock A.M.
Harriet S. Allen Died Dec. 11th 1897 at 6:50 P.M.
William M. Allen Died August 31st 1899 at 11:30 o'clock A.M.

G.E. Lock Died Nov. 1814
Eliza M. Lock died Sept. 7th 1835
Maria F. Lock Died March 30th 1840
Lydia D. Lock died July 4th 1829
Samuel Lock died Lowell, September 25th, 1847 @ 9 o'clock & 45 min. P.M.
Lydia Lock died Lowell, March 17, 1854 at 10 minutes of 11 - P.M. -
M.A. Daigneau Died July 20th 1889

Susan Amanda Emerson died Jan. 14th 1900 at 9:55 P.M.

CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS

No. 9

Steven Rand Cemetery, on Goboro Road, across from former Stevens, now Patterson home.

Rand

[Stephen Rand](#) Died Aug. 23, 1863 ae 81 y'rs 8 mo. 13 d's
[Betsey \(Wood Rand\)](#), wife of Stephen Rand, died Oct. 15, 1831 ae 42 y'rs
[Mary \(Holmes\)](#), wife of Stephen Rand, died Jan. 4, 1844 ae 57

FROM OLD NEWSPAPERS:

NH Patriot 6-22-1813

ABSCONDED from the town of Epsom, SOLOMON SUTTON, a town pauper. All persons are hereby forbid harboring or trusting him on the account of said town, for we shall not pay any debt of his contracting after this date.

Samuel Morrill
Richard Tripp
Bickford Lang - Selectmen
Epsom, June 10, 1813

NH Patriot 8-27-1816

Notice.
ABSCONDED from the town of Epsom, JOHN WELLS, a town pauper. The subscribers hereby forbid all persons furnishing him with supplies on the account of the town, for we will not pay any charges incurred for his support subsequent to this date, except by special contract.

SAMUEL MORRILL, BICKFORD LANG,
Selectmen of Epsom
Epsom, Aug. 19, 1816

NH Patriot 7-21-1818

ALL persons are hereby cautioned against harboring or trusting JUDITH KENISTON, a person who has for sometime past, with her child, been supported by the town of Epsom, and having lately eloped, the town therefore determine to pay no bills or debts for the support of the said Judith or child after this date. T.D. MERRILL, SAM'L MORRIL, Selectmen of Epsom.

June 15, 1818

NH Patriot 6-6-1820

ALL persons are forbid harboring or supporting DANIEL GRANT, a pauper supported by the town of Epsom, on account of said town or on my account, as I have contracted with the selectmen for his support and have made ample provision therefore.

MATTHIAS HAYNES
Epsom, May 23, 1820