

EPSOM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Volume IV Number 4

March 2001

New Rye Re-visited Sunday 2:30 pm

The next meeting of the Epsom Historical Association will be held at the I.O.O.F. Hall on Sunday, March 25th beginning at 2:30 p.m.

The topic will focus on the New Rye section of Epsom, as Phil Yeaton reprises live his Epsom Public Library 1993 Infathon video presentation.

Phil will give us a "walking" tour of the road leading from Short Falls through New Rye with excursions to the Mountain and Wing roads. Along the way we will meet the families that used to populate this area of Epsom. Among the families you are likely to encounter are those of Brown, Haynes, Davis, Dolbeer, Cass, Dowst, Yeaton, Goodhue and many more. He will also discuss how these families are closely linked in this small community. Among the landmarks on the journey will be the New Rye Church, the New Rye Schoolhouse, Little Red Schoolhouse and various small family cemetery plots. Other items of interest will be discussion of how some of these families made a living, from farming, shoemaking, to making ice. Please join us for what will be a most delightful and interesting discussion.

Did you know hundreds of people from around the country have visited the

[EPSOM EARLY SETTLERS](http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~epsom/) website ?

Have You ?

<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~epsom/>

The Christian Society - the New Rye Church



The beginnings of the Christian Society has its roots in the adjacent town of Allenstown, NH, which was best chronicled in an article in the Granite Monthly magazine of January 1912. John Dowst, who spent much of his life accumulating the history of Allenstown, wrote the article as the earliest records of the town prior to 1843 were destroyed in a fire. He writes:

(continued on back page)

Epsom Gravestone Photos Online

An extensive project to have photos of Epsom Gravestones online, primarily prior to 1940, has begun. The photographs, taken over a two year period, are to preserve them as many of them are now badly decayed and broken. The photos, which will number over 1500, would take an immense amount of space to store on the internet, but a new program by Genealogy.com has solved the storage problem. New Rye cemetery photos currently available include gravestones in the Cass, Robinson, Schoolhouse, Wells-Brown, Brown-Wallace, Brown-Davis, Haines and Lear cemeteries. Access is through the **Epsom Early Settlers** online website with easy links by individual to each stone.

"The first religious services of which we have found any record were held at the house of Ede Hall Burgin in April, 1791 by Elder Elias Smith, then on his way from Haverhill to Newmarket, NH. Unlike many of the older towns of the State, and perhaps, some no older than our own, it never had a church of the Congregational order with a minister supported by taxation and a long disagreement over the location of the church edifice, as was frequently the case. Perhaps the principal reason for this was the fewness of the inhabitants and their location, then, as now, like a fringe around the borders of the town, instead of clustering around a central village. We find that some of those in the eastern part of the town went to Epsom and Deerfield to attend services; those in the Western part to the church on Pembroke street, and probably the Halls and others in the South parish to Candia."

"The earliest preaching in town, of which we find any mention, was by traveling or evangelistic parsons, and the meetings were evidently held in private houses in cold weather, and in barns in the summer, for in those days they had no school houses, but hired a room in a private house in which to conduct the school. This Elias Smith, then a young man just beginning his ministry, visited Allenstown and preached at intervals until 1840, and, perhaps later. He, with Elder Abner Jones and one other, founded the New England section of the Christian Church. I found that a church was organized here July 10, 1807, which would make it one of the earliest in the history of the denomination, for Elder Abner Jones did not commence to preach until 1801 in Lyndon, Vermont. Elder Randall, founder of the Free Will Baptist denomination, preached at Samuel Kenison's July 8th 1802, and Elder Mark Fernald was a frequent visitor here during his long ministry, beginning in 1808 and ending in 1852."

"The records give the details of the organization and rolls with additions for some years, articles of faith and belief, and seem to have been kept well by Hall Burgin, Clerk, the last entry being dated July 3, 1828. A creed, or statement of belief, was adopted and on September 26, 1818, Elder Abner Jones was called. He was evidently in no hurry to accept, for the records of January 15, 1821, almost two and one-half years later, read, 'By order of Elder Abner Jones, I hereby record that he accepts of and agrees to comply with the above desire. Hall Burgin, Clerk.'" Many of the Epsom Residents in the New Rye section of town, on the Allenstown border, attended church in

that town, and from the rolls, we see the following families: Benjamin, David and Moses Robinson, Josiah and Bathsheba Allen, and the families of Dickey, Tripp, Bickford, Worth, and Davis. The Allenstown church apparently continued to flourish, and on August 1, 1859, Edwin T. Philbrick, son of Simeon, grandson of Jonathan, and a member of the church, was ordained to the Christian ministry in the old meetinghouse in Allenstown. There he is said to have preached two or three years. This story is continued in the Hurd History of Belknap and Merrimack Counties, the Epsom History by John Dolbeer:

"About the year 1860, Edwin T. Philbrick, then living in that part of Epsom familiarly known as 'New Rye' left his forge and anvil, reorganized the old church and was ordained its pastor in the month of August, 1859. As the larger portion of the attendants at the Sabbath services came from Epsom, and the conveniences at the old Allenstown Church were very poor, it was decided to build a new church edifice, and the summer of 1861 witnessed the building of the Christian meetinghouse and the organization of the 'First Christian Society of Epsom.' The church was dedicated September 8, 1861, the Rev. A.G. Comings of Lee, NH preaching the dedicatory sermon."

"From that time the Christian Church of Allenstown became the First Christian Church of Epsom, with the Rev. E.T. Philbrick as its pastor, who continued in that relation for several years, during which time many additions were made to the church and society. Following Mr. Philbrick, the Rev. J.P. Stinchfield, a Methodist minister supplied the pulpit for one year, from April 1869. Rev. Benjamin Dickson of Wolfborough was the next supply, preaching to them two or three years, and was followed by Rev. M.M. Cleverly of Lynn, Mass., and he by Rev. George D. Garland, and after him Rev. James Philips. Between the services of the above-named clergymen, the pulpit was frequently occupied by different persons for a few Sabbaths at a time."

"Since 1881 there has been but little preaching in this church by ministers of the Christian denomination, but the summers of 1881, 1883 and 1884, Rev. E.C. Cogswell, occupied the pulpit, and the services were attended by many who formerly attended the Congregational Church in the other part of town." [Note: Rev. Cogswell preached at the church "in the other part of town" from Decemeber 1876 to June 1881]