

EPSOM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Meetings Resume *March 24 - 2:30 pm*

Program

THE SEIZURE OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORT WILLIAM AND MARY

When you read the history books you get the general impression that this country's giant step toward revolution was at Lexington and Concord, and that perhaps prior to that time Paul Revere did nothing but make silver items (except for the one time he rode his horse to spread the alarm that the British were coming). You might also have the impression that New Hampshire men's first venture into revolution was at Bunker Hill. Well my friends, you don't know the whole story!

Paul Revere made an earlier call to alarm in 1774, which roused New Hampshire men into action. That included at least one Epsom resident, but whom, and what was the fuss all about?

The answers to all those questions can be found at the next meeting of the Epsom Historical Association to be held at the IOOF Hall, Sunday afternoon at 2:30. Our speaker will be Thomas F. Kehr, President of the New Hampshire Society, Sons of the American Revolution, who is an attorney in Concord, New Hampshire, where he resides with his wife and four young children. He was a founding partner of Kehr and Urban, LLP, a firm dealing with Federal and State civil litigation arising across New England, and currently operates the Office of Thomas F. Kehr, PLLC, Attorney at Law, in Concord (Penacook), New Hampshire. His essay on the seizure of the Fort William and Mary recently appeared in the SAR national magazine. Don't miss out on this most informative and unique look at some important and unknown New Hampshire History.

******WEBNEWS******

EPSOM PUBLIC LIBRARY LAUNCHES WEBSITE

The Epsom Public Library recently added its first pages to the world-wide-web at www.epsomlibrary.com. Among the first pages available are pictures and descriptions of some of the special collections in the library's holdings. In addition the site maintains a list of new books, a calendar of town events, pages for several Epsom organizations and links to Epsom business websites.

Of interest historically are the special collections which include chromo-lithograph's of Louis Prang; a statuary group entitled "The Council of War" representing President Abraham Lincoln in consultation with the Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton and General U.S. Grant; the old meetinghouse bible; and some memorabilia of the old GAR building, including a civil war era hat, belt and sword. Additional information on these items are found in links added to the special collections descriptions.

EPSOM EARLY SETTLERS WEBSITE GETS FACELIFT

The Epsom Early Settlers website recently got a new look and feel as all the pages, which previously resided on 5 different servers, are now all contained on one server. What does this mean; well, all new web addresses for all the pages, and since they are now all together, they can be searched through a simple text search box found on the main page. A link to the Epsom Library is also included on all the EES pages. A newer and simple address will get you to both sites:

www.2eha.net

EPSOM TOWN HALL

The first meetinghouse that was built in Epsom was raised in 1764. This was built next to the McClary Cemetery and its approximate location is marked by a monument. This was owned by the town and so most town meetings were held there after 1764. This was also used as a house of worship. In 1845 the Congregational Society built a church of their own next to the site of the former Knowles Store.

Sometime between 1845 and 1850 it was voted to construct a new town meeting house in what was coming to be the new center of town. This town house is the one that now stands on Route 4 and is being renovated for town use and the preservation of a fine old building.



The present building was built circa 1850 and the land was purchased from Robert Knox for \$25.15. The land was not much larger than the town house. The house was built by Jonathan Knowles at a cost of \$654.00. Henry F. Sanborn supplied 158 feet of stone for the foundation. Benjamin L. Locke and Ephraim Locke Jr. served on the building committee. The new town house was used for all town affairs and also rented on occasions as an 1856 receipt for \$5.00 for town house use for a dancing school shows. In 1858 Albert Cass was paid for finishing a room in the town house and

William Tripp for stair seats for the house - probably the upstairs office.

New windows were installed in 1893-94 and the interior was plastered and painted and a new floor was laid. Water was installed in 1922/23 and it was wired for electricity in 1927.

The present committee is hard at work in preserving the town hall and under their guidance the building should be preserved as a town historic structure for many years to come.

BIOGRAPHY: Louis PRANG

(1824-1909)

He was born in Breslau of a French Huguenot father and German mother, and learned to dye print calico in his father's shop. After traveling as a journeyman in Europe, he went to the United States in 1850, a refugee of the revolutionary period. He came well trained as a lithographer and settled in Boston, where he started as a wood-engraver. He also became a lithographer, color-printer and publisher. Soon after the Civil War he began printing chromo lithographs; and during the 1870's he began to issue color reproductions of famous paintings.

He is acknowledged as the creator of the Christmas card. Although such cards were prepared for sale probably as early as the 1840's, it was not until about 1862 that the custom of sending them to friends and relatives became common. He promoted the greeting card movement in America in 1856 and produced cards at his lithograph shop in Boston every year after that date. He can thus be blamed for the fact that each Christmas we have the tedious job of writing hundreds of Christmas greetings to our relatives and friends. (from the "Emotions Greeting Card website)

You can see the Prang Chromo-lithographs hanging in the Epsom Public Library, or view them online at the new library website.