



# Epsom Historical Association

## NEWSLETTER

*Catch up to the Past* November 2007



*next meeting*

## HOLIDAY SOCIAL

SUNDAY 3-5 pm

DECEMBER 9

The Epsom Historical Association will hold its next meeting at the new Epsom Public Library on Sunday, December 9 from 3 to 5 pm. The holiday social includes refreshments and will be highlighted by an indoor tree lighting. A short business meeting will be held to elect officers for the next year. The event is open to the public.

## In our emailed NEWSLETTER

Members of the Epsom Historical Association who provide their email addresses receive the expanded Newsletter via email. The twelve page color expanded newsletter this month includes:

- \* *Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals from the diary of Rev. Arthur Caverno, housed at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston.*
- \* *Cemetery Inscriptions from the Robinson Cemetery.*
- \* *New Rye Scholars from 1849.*
- \* *Marden District students from 1869.*
- \* *Epsom School Statistics 1845.*
- \* *Photos of Epsom's One Room Schools.*
- \* *Mountain Road school fire.*
- \* *A Winter Story-the Factory Bell letter.*
- \* *Epsom News from old Newspapers.*

Notices of upcoming events and web site updates are also periodically sent out to members. To receive the newsletter by email plus other updates, send your email address to [epsomhistory@aol.com](mailto:epsomhistory@aol.com).

# RECORDS FROM THE DIARY OF REV. ARTHUR CAVERNO

Arthur Caverno's first pastorate was starting the Epsom Free Will Baptist Church in Epsom in 1824. The group met in the old meetinghouse on Center Hill, alternating at times with the Congregational Society until each built their own structures. The Diary is housed at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston as part of the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections. Since Rev. Caverno only stayed in Epsom a couple years, the diary entries for Epsom cover about 18 pages. Photocopies of those pages are now part of the Historical Association files.

From a book called "Life and Times in Hopkinton, N. H. in three parts" by C. C. Lord published 1890.

"Arthur Caverno was born in that part of Barrington now called Strafford, April 6, 1801, being a son of Jeremiah Caverno and Margaret Brewster. Until 18 years of age, Arthur attended only the common school, and then he was sent six months to Gilmanton academy, under the tuition of Prof. A. Mack. Subsequently, he taught school a number of years. In 1821, he studied practical surveying with David Clarke, of Northwood. In the summer of 1822, he attended school at South Newmarket, Prof. M. White being preceptor. In 1818, having made public profession of religion, the subject of this sketch was baptized by the Rev. Enoch Place, of Rochester, on the 11th of November, his mother being baptized at the same time. He began preaching in 1820; was licensed by the New Durham Quarterly Meeting, convened at Deerfield, August 23, 1822; was ordained in an oak grove at his old homestead, June 17, 1823, the ordaining council being Revs. Samuel B. Dyer, Moses Bean, David Harriman, Enoch Place, and William Buzzell. In 1824, he organized a church in Epsom, where he remained three years. In 1823, December 23, Rev. Arthur Caverno married Olive H. Foss, who died January 12, 1832. In 1855, February 7, Rev. Mr. Caverno married Mrs. Isabel J. Soule, of Bath, Me".

## BAPTISMS In Epsom July 4, 1824

Elizabeth Marden, Lydia Marden, Eliza Robinson.  
In Epsom Sept. 12th 1824

Joshua Haines, Samuel Green, John Tripp, Daniel P. Cilley, Hiram Parker, Marie Lawrence, Sarah Parker, Nancy Green, Polly Green, Sarah Tripp, Elizabeth Lamper, Anna Clark.

October 10th 1824

Richard Worth, John Worth, James Worth, Fanny Wiggins, Adaline Dolloff, Sarah Bickford, Jonathan Marden and Mary Mann.

Oct. 12, 1824

Samuel Fowler, Love Elliott, Eleanor Dickey, Hannah Bickford and Jane Bickford.

Oct. 17th 1824

Samuel Wells, William Fowler and Martha Philbrook.

Oct. 31

Eliza Bickford

Dec. 25th

James McCutcheon and wife.

May 1st, **1825**

Jacob Wallace and Ann McDaniels.

July 24th

Elizabeth Shepherd

Aug. 28th 1825

Elizabeth Chesley, Rachel Wallace, Emma Wallace and Mary Osgood.

June 3, **1827**

Mary Grant

October 21st

Mrs. Olive H. Caverno (my beloved wife)

Aug. 10th **1828**

Mrs. Comfort Tarlton, wife of Wm. Tarlton

## MARRIAGES

In Epsom, March 23rd, 1825

Mr. Simeon Philbrick of Allenstown and Miss Olive Bickford of the former place. \$1.00

In Epsom, July 28th 1825

Mr. Nehemiah Chase of Pittsfield to Miss Judith James of Northwood. \$1.00

In Epsom, Nov. 3rd, 1825  
Mr. Samuel Wells Jr. and Miss Eleanor Dickey, both  
of said town. \$1.00

In Epsom, Nov. 24th, 1825  
Mr. Isaac Dowst and Miss Sally Robinson, both of  
Epsom. \$3.00

In Epsom January 12th, 1826  
Mr. Jonathan Jenness of Loudon and Miss Martha  
Philbrick of the former place. \$1.00

In Epsom, Aug. 3rd, 1826  
Mr. John C. Ross of Fort Constitution (N.H.) and  
Miss Elizabeth Pettingill of the former place. \$.50 cts

In Epsom, Sept. 27th, 1826  
Mr. Douglas M. Heath and Miss Rebecca F.  
Currier, both of said town. \$1.00

In Epsom, Nov. 16th, 1826  
Mr. Samuel Goss and Mrs. Elizabeth Cochran, both  
of said town. \$1.00

In Epsom, Jan. 9th, 1827  
Mr. Samuel Davis of said town and Mrs. Betsey  
George of Concord. \$1.00

In Epsom, Jan. 11th, 1827  
Mr. Stephen Avery of Strafford and Miss Ann  
McDaniel of the former place. \$5 Francs

In Epsom, Feb. 8th, 1827  
Mr. Bradbury Cilley and Miss Mary Smith, the latter  
formerly of Deerfield. \$1.00

In Epsom, March 19th, 1827  
Mr. Asa Prescott and Miss Sophronia Bunker.  
\$1.00

In Epsom, April 5th, 1827  
Mr. Samuel Hoag of Epping and Miss Hannah B.  
Philbrick of the former place. \$2.00

In Epsom, May 16th, 1827  
Mr. John Goss and Miss Eliza Wallace, both of  
Epsom. \$1 Crown

In Epsom, July 2m 1827  
Mr. Daniel R. Kelley and Miss Betsey R. Richards,  
both of Chichester. \$1.00

In Epsom, Nov. 26th, 1827  
Mr. Samuel Brown 3rd of Pittsfield and Miss Betsey  
Page of Epsom. \$1.00

In Epsom, Sept. 9, 1928  
Mr. John Lovejoy and Miss mary Green, both of  
Epsom. \$1.00

### **FUNERALS In Epsom 1826**

Jan. 16  
Emma Wallace  
Washington Marden  
Jan. 26  
Mrs. Ann Davis, wife of Samuel D.  
Jan. 31  
Jonathan Brackett  
Feb. 7  
Sally Robinson  
Nancy Sherburne  
Lavina, a child of Benjamin Bickford  
March 2  
John Robinson  
March 13  
Wid. Abigail Fowler  
April 16  
Ebenezer Brackett  
April 19  
James Robinson  
May 18  
Sarah Prescott  
May 29  
A child of Amos Davis  
Sept. 17  
Mary Jane Tarlton  
Oct. 7  
A child of Reuben Sanborn  
Nov. 27  
Mrs. Martha Jenness

**1827**

Sept. 12  
Mrs. John Grant  
Oct. 20  
Mr. A. Prescott

# 1849 LIST OF NEW RYE SCHOLARS

Abbie Cotton Haynes taught school at New Rye in Epsom ten weeks during the summer of 1849. She boarded at Mr. Sherburne Haynes and reported she had a very pleasant school. From her original, here are the names of scholars in Epsom in the summer of 1849, followed by their age.

Catherine M. Bickford 6  
Samuel T. Bickford 12  
Almira & Alvira Brown (twins) 11  
Charles A. Brown 4  
Emily Brown 4  
George E. Brown 6  
Harriet F. Brown 7  
John Calvin Brown 8  
Laura J. Brown 6  
Maria L. Brown 13  
Mary L. Brown 15  
Mehitable L. Brown 15  
Sarah A. Brown 10  
Wilbur F. Brown 6  
Abby M. Chapman 13  
Charles A. Chapman 5  
Emily A. Chapman 11  
Susan Chapman 8  
Cynthia J. Clough 14  
David Ansel Clough 6  
John Cochran 5  
Mary J. Cochran 7  
Alonzo Dolbeer 5  
John H. Dolbeer 10  
John R. Davis 10  
Charles W. Goss 10  
Job G. Goss 8  
Lucy A. Goss 5  
Frances M. P. Haynes 10  
Hannah J. Haynes 6  
Jeremiah Haynes 11  
Mary J. Haynes 6  
Mary J. Haynes 5  
Olive A. Haynes 8  
Sarah L. Haynes 14  
Carter A. Johnson 13  
Abby Lear 17  
Rosetta J. Lear 9

Flora A. Lear 6  
Henry Lear 5  
Nancy D. Lear 8  
Thomas Alvin Lear 5  
Henry H. Lane 6  
Elma Jane Locke 14  
Josiah C. Lear 4  
Lydia M. Prescott 5  
Caroline A. Saunders 8  
Mary A. Saunders 4  
Sarah J. Saunders 11  
James Straw 6  
Susan A. Straw 4  
Mary E. Wells 3  
Sarah E. Wells 11

## NAMES OF SCHOLARS IN DISTRICT No. 10 MARDEN DISTRICT 1869

Teacher, Etta W. Door, taken from copy of Record of Attendance. Age in year and months follows the name of the student.

Lavina Marden 15-5  
Addie R. Marden 12-7  
Anna E. Marden 13-1  
Susan F. Marden 11-6  
Mary E. Marden 15-4  
Olive A. Marden 6-7  
Delia T. Marden 6-3  
Abbie E. Bartlett 8-8  
Lucy A. Bartlett 13-2  
Martha E. Greenleif 14-3  
Annie M. Lake 14-6  
Clara A. Gordon 16-3  
Annie F. Batchelder 12-4  
  
James B. Morrill 13-5  
Augustus Bartlett 8-4  
Bennie Lake 8-3  
George F. Gordon 10-6  
Willie H. Marden 10-2  
Walter Marden - 13-5  
George Marsh 12-3  
Fred Marden 6-4

**1845 EPSOM SCHOOL STATISTICS**

District 1 Center Hill  
 First Term - 14 weeks  
 Teacher - Lucy A. Lord  
 Males attending - 35  
 Females attending - 45  
 Total students enrolled 80

District 2 Cilley (Gossville)  
 First Term - 7 weeks  
 Teacher - Susan E.P. Brown  
 Males attending - 30  
 Females attending - 25  
 Total students enrolled 55

District 3 Mountain  
 First Term - 11 weeks  
 Teacher - David Smith  
 Males attending - 12  
 Females attending - 15  
 Total students enrolled 27

District 4 Short Falls  
 First Term - 9 weeks  
 Teacher - Sarah D. Yeaton  
 Males attending - 15  
 Females attending - 15  
 Total students enrolled 30

District 5 New Orchard Road  
 First Term - 7 weeks  
 Teacher - Mary A. Heath  
 Males attending - 6  
 Females attending - 7  
 Total students enrolled 14

District 7 North Road  
 First Term - 8 weeks  
 Teacher - Mary A. Nealy  
 Males attending - 15  
 Females attending - 12  
 Total students enrolled 27

District 8 Fowler  
 First Term - 8 weeks  
 Teacher - Mary S. Green  
 Males attending - 12  
 Females attending - 10  
 Total students enrolled 22

District 9 New Rye  
 First Term - 11 weeks  
 Teacher - Hannah M. Wells  
 Males attending - 22  
 Females attending - 38  
 Total students enrolled 60

**TOTAL STUDENTS FIRST TERM 315**

District 1 Center Hill  
 Second Term - 14 weeks  
 Teacher - Henry F. Sanborn  
 Males attending - 40  
 Females attending - 40  
 Total students enrolled 80

District 2 Cilley (Gossville)  
 Second Term - 7 weeks  
 Teacher - Nathaniel J. Pinkham  
 Males attending - 38  
 Females attending - 25  
 Total students enrolled 63

District 4 Short Falls  
 Second Term - 9 weeks  
 Teacher - Tobias Foss  
 Males attending - 23  
 Females attending - 23  
 Total students enrolled 46

District 5 New Orchard Road  
 Second Term - 7 weeks  
 Teacher - John S. Cate  
 Males attending - 9  
 Females attending - 10  
 Total students enrolled 19

District 7 North Road  
 Second Term - 8 weeks  
 Teacher - William Ham  
 Males attending - 15  
 Females attending - 12  
 Total students enrolled 27

District 8 Fowler  
 Second Term - 8 weeks  
 Teacher - Mary S. Green  
 Males attending - 12  
 Females attending - 10  
 Total students enrolled 22

District 9 New Rye  
 Second Term - 11 weeks  
 Teacher - Jonathan C. Sanders  
 Males attending - 29  
 Females attending - 34  
 Total students enrolled 63

District 6 Adjoining with another town  
 Students attending - 14

District 10 Adjoining with another town  
 Students attending - 3

These were with Chichester and Pittsfield. A few years later District No. 10, the Marden District, was formed in Epsom.



**District No. 1 - Center**  
Original 1765  
Shown built 1880  
Current use - residence



**District No. 4 - Short Falls**  
Original before 1808  
Shown built 1853  
Current use - Legion Hall



**District No. 2 - Cilley/Gossville**  
Original before 1808  
Shown built 1884  
Current use - residence



**District No. 5 - New Orchard**  
Original before 1808  
Shown built 1884  
Current use - storage



**District No. 3 - Mountain**  
Original before 1808  
Shown built 1834  
Current use - unoccupied



**District No. 7 - North Road**  
Original before 1808  
Shown built 1871  
Current use - residence

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**District No. 8 - Fowler**

Original about 1834

Shown built 1834

Current use - no longer standing



**District No. 9 - New Rye**

Original before 1834

Shown built 1879/burned 1998

Current use - Rebuilt Scout meeting place



**District No. 10 - Marden**

Original 1851

Shown built 1851

Current use - storage

**CEMETERY**  
**INSCRIPTIONS**

**No. 14 Robinson Cemetery**, Located in New Rye, off Mountain Road, on right past Red School House.

**Dowst**

[Sarah Ann](#), daur of Isaac & Sally Dowst, died Oct. 5, 1840, ae 2 yr 1 mo. & 19 d's

[Lydia Ann](#), daur of Isaac & Sally Dowst, died Jan. 4, 1837 ae 13 mo's 4 d's

**Potter**

[Emogene M.](#), daur of David & Elcy A. Potter, DIED March 26, 1860, 1 y'r 10 d's

**Robinson**

[John Robinson](#) who died Dec. 12, 1839 ae 68 yrs 5 mos

[Betsey \(Dennett\)](#), In memory of, wife of John Robinson, who died May 17, 1800 aged 27 yrs.

[Susannah \(Tilton\)](#), In memory of, wife of John Robinson, who died Feb. 10, 1815 ae 40

[John](#), son of John & Susannah Robinson, died Sept. 26, 1810 ae 6 months

[William Robinson](#) 1802-1881

[Nancy \(Ladd\) Robinson](#), his wife, 1799-1888

**Robinson**

[Polly](#), In memory of, Daughter of John & Betsey Robinson, who died Sept. 8, 1819 in the 24th yr. of her age

[Mr. Thomas Robinson](#) died July 15, 1834 ae 26 yrs 8 mos 11 days

[Henry O.](#), son of Horace and Sarah J. Robinson, DIED April 11, 1860 age 2 y'rs 8 mos

[A.A.R.](#) (footstone only, base of stone still in place, but the gravestone itself has turned to dust)

There were many graves with the footstones, but no date on them, and no trace after all these years of the headstones. There are also references to burials of some Hartford (Hiram) & family members - no visible signs 1999.

## PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

At the September meeting of the Epsom Historical Association a program on the one room schools of Epsom was presented. During the presentation the Mountain School building was discussed with reference being made to the structure having burned in January 1833. Though mentioned in several historical accounts, no actual mention of the fire was found in any town records to confirm it. Recently, looking through old newspapers, the following article came to light.

*Dover Gazette & Strafford Advertiser, December 31, 1833* "Epsom, Dec. 17, 1833. - **Fire.** - On Saturday night at one of the clock, the School house, in the Mountain District was discovered to be on fire. The wind blowing from the north east kept the flames from the neighboring buildings. The house was so much burnt, when discovered, that the books, stationary &c. belonging to the scholars were all destroyed. Loss \$200."

Accounts tell that the school was rebuilt, and indeed new research shows the following from a deed - Benjamin Wiggin to School District #3, Dec. 8, 1834 that "a piece taken off the southwesterly corner of the land whereon I know live whereon the schoolhouse in said District number three now stands as the stone wall wall now stands for the privilege of a school house lot."

This would indicate that the school house had indeed been rebuilt. It was not uncommon for these early schools to be on private land, and as time went on, many eventually show up in deeds. This deed also indicates that the buildings not burned during the school house fire were likely the dwelling home and buildings of Benjamin Wiggin. Benjamin Wiggin died in 1844 and is buried in the cemetery next to the school house. The 1858 map of Epsom shows a dwelling next to the school house belonging to David Dickey.

## EPSOM NEWS FROM OLD NEWSPAPERS

*Dover Gazette & Strafford Advertiser, July 12, 1831* - "The dwelling house of Mr. John Chesley, at Epsom, was burnt on Wednesday night last. There is no doubt the fire was set by an incendiary. Fire had twice before within a short time, been applied to Mr. Chesley's barn, and had gone out, leaving the brands which were intended to kindle the flames. The house was so much on fire before it was discovered that only a small portion of furniture in the front part was saved". - N.H. Patriot.

*Boston Courier, March 31, 1842.* "A barn belonging to a Mr. Chesley, in Epsom, N.H., was burned, with about a dozen head of cattle, a few evenings since. A person by the name of Hoit, has been committed to prison under the charge of setting it on fire."

*New Hampshire Statesman & State Journal, September 30, 1842.* "Samuel Hoyt, a youth about 13 years of age, indicted for burning a barn in Epsom, was found guilty, and sentenced to one day solitary confinement, and three years hard labor in the State Prison."

*New Hampshire Statesman and State Journal, September 29, 1838.* "John F. Drew was convicted of entering the dwelling house of Eleanor Brown of Epsom, and stealing, in the night time - found guilty; sentence suspended on the question arising as to the ownership of the dwelling, as alleged in the indictment; sentence suspended."

*New Hampshire Statesman & State Journal, March 9, 1839.* "Fire. We understand that the Tavern House of Mr. Durban Batchelder, of Epsom, was destroyed by a fire a few days since. Loss \$1500 or more, beside several hundred dollars in money. The property had been insured in the N.H. Mutual Office; but the owner suffered his policy to expire a few weeks since, without renewal."

*The Dover Gazette, June 9, 1860.* "They say that gold was discovered in the town of Epsom of this state. One man dug out \$30 dollars worth, \$10 worth of which was in one piece."



*Lowell Daily Citizen and News, December 18, 1868.* "The house and out-buildings of Mr. Daniel Locke of Epsom were burned on Tuesday night last. The loss of the household furniture, cattle, hay, grain and farming utensils was heavy."

*Boston Daily Advertiser, November 16, 1869.* "The barn of Mr. James C. Yeaton, at Jenness's Corner, Epsom, was consumed by fire on Friday night last, and with it eight horses, harnesses and grain. The loss falls on a Mr. Keenan, who is a contractor on the Suncook Valley Railroad."

*The Daily Patriot, October 6, 1871.* "Robbery and Retribution. - On the 4th in Epsom, the freight in the Suncook Valley Railroad station was raided on by Charles Blaisell and William S. Morrill of Chichester, and flour, rasins and other groceries stolen therefrom. Both men were captured and tried before Justice Thomas H. Thorndike of Pittsfield, who demanded \$600 bail of each. Like the apostles, they had no scrip with them and, accordingly, were comitted to jail here last evening, the 5th. They are likely to go before the Grand Jury now sitting, in which case retribution will be speedy. The property stolen was owned by Epsom and Northwood parties. One of the men is reputed a desperate rescal and the other as his dupe, but which is which we could not learn."

*Boston Daily Advertiser, November 21, 1868.* "Major-General John Nason died at St. Alban's (VT) on Thursday forenoon last. He went to that town from Epsom, N.H., in 1794, and has resided there ever since. He was one of the oldest men in the country, and was more depended on than any other for facts concerning its early history. He was much respected and his death was greatly lamented. His age was 87 years."

*Dover Gazette & Strafford Advertiser, September 1, 1849.* Suicide by Drowning. - A melancholy affair occured at Epsom on the afternoon of the 8th inst. - Mr. Abram S. Haynes, a resident of that place, believing that he had not been quite shrewd enough in some business transaction, committed suicide by drowing himself in the river, near what is called the Forks. That his friends might know where

cont.

to look for him, he wrote a note and stepped into a tenement in the building in which he lived, occupied my Mr. Goodhue, and secreted it in a bed. Just at dark Mrs. Goodhue went to lay down a child, she discovered it. The following is a copy of it:-

'You will find my body in the Big river by Cilley's. Trouble of mind causes me to do this. It is hard for me to part with my dear wife and little son, but I do not want to live. I want all my folks to be good to my wife and son, for they always treated me affectionately. So farewell, my dear wife, may heaven protect you.

Abram S. Haynes Augsut 8, 1849'

Search was immediately made but the body was not found till near midnight. He was 25 years of age. Mr. Haynes was an industrious and enterprising young man, and he has left a large circle of friends who mourn his loss." - N.H. Democrat.

*Independent Statesman, July 29, 1875.* Epsom. "The sudden death of one of our most esteemed citizens, Capt. Andrew M. Heath, has caused a shade of sadness to fall upon our entire community. By his noble traits of character he won the love and respect of very many friends who noe deeply mourn his loss. He was know here, as well as in adjoining towns, as a successful teacher, ever encouraging his pupils to seek the noblest objects in life, and enforcing his precepts by his own example of truest manhood. In view of death he was undisturbed, and although he expressed a desire to live a few years longer, yet he showed a calm resignation to the will of Him who 'doeth all things well.' The sorrowing family have the most heartfelt sympathy of his many friends, and although his death to us seems untimely, we remember that 'a Christian cannot die before his time.'

One of his pupils"

*Boston Daily Advertiser, June 13, 1876.* "The body of a man was found floating in the river at Concord on Sunday morning, which had evidently been in the water some five or six days. It was identified as that of Charles T. Cofran of Epsom, an insane man, who escaped from the asylum on Monday last.

## The Letter and a Winter Story - the Factory Bell

Fremont, February 25 1889

Writing of Hampton reminds me of the old "Strawberry Bank" bell on the Pittsfield factory.

When I wrote to you last, I intended to give you a little sketch of it, as related by Great Aunt Nabby Philbrick and her sister Molly Marston, when visiting on the "Hill" when I was a kid but I had got my letter too near done, before I thought of it.

When I was seven or eight years old they came to Epsom one winter to see their brother Daniel ("King David's") father, who was in his last sickness. Staying a week or two and spent considerable of their time on the "Hill."

One evening they chanced to be out of doors and heard the bell ring and on coming in Aunt Nabby gave us its history, and once when I was twenty-two or twenty-three she told over again at Hampton. When Portsmouth was first settled (1623) the first log houses were erected near the banks of the Piscataqua and, its being summer, the strawberries were so plentiful in the vicinity that the new settlement took the name of "Strawberry Bank." In course of time a log church was built and was known as "Strawberry Bank" meetinghouse.

The congregation was called together by blowing a conch, a kind of seashell. (I presume you know what they are) then this church was in time superceded by a frame building, but the settlement was then so large that a conch could not be heard to its limits so a bass drum was used to summon the churchgoers. (Few people had a clock in those days)

After years increased the size of "Strawberry Bank" so much that the church building became overcrowded, another was erected with a tower.

The Bass drum was still used but some of the advanced thinkers in the congregation began to agitate the subject of having a bell like they had in *Boston*, (Kings Chapel had a bell for some years) but the majority of the old Puritans, Congregationalist opposed it so much, as savoring of Popery, or the Church of England, that the project was abandoned. The minister opposed it also.

A few years afterwards the richest man in the settlement, an old sea Captain, whose name I have forgotten, offered to donate a bell if the church would agree to use it but this they refused to do.

The Captain was a crafty old fellow and he went around among the members of the church, and among the younger persons in the place, and others, offering five pounds Sterling (\$5.00) apiece if they would make a profession of religion, join the church, and then vote in favor of a bell. Quite a number did so, and on his next trip to England he brought out a bell from Portsmouth

England, that had previously been used as a fog alarm on the Isle of Wight.

In the meantime so many of the "bought" members of the church had back slid and been "read out" that on the arrival of the bell it was voted against once more. Then the "Portsmouth Idol" (as it was called on account of its coming from Portsmouth England) was left standing on the wharf quite a number of years, when the church got a new minister who was in favor of the bell and by his influence the members voted to accept it and it was accordingly hung in the church tower and the old Bass drum consigned to oblivion. The same trip that the bell came out, an ancestor, Col. Ayers, of Aunt Nabby's grandfather, came out too from the north of England on the Scottish border.

He was then a young man and single, but afterwards married and settled in "Strawberry Bank" which place about that time took the name of Portsmouth, from the Portsmouth "Idol" I think, but am not quite sure, that the "Idol" was used on still another church building after this, but at any rate it was used as a church bell until after the war of 1812, when it was "turned out of the church" and sold to go to the little church at Gosport on the Isle of Shoals, but they failed to raise the money and it eventually found its way to Pittsfield N.H. At the time that she and Aunt Molly were visiting us, on the "Hill" she said one day that she wished she could be near the bell when it was ringing and see if it would sound to her, in her old age, as it used to sound to her when she was a "gall" and used to go to Grandmarm Agnes and go to "meeting" and stand on the "singing" seats and listen to it. So one night after an early supper mother harnessed up and took Aunt Nabby, Aunt Molly and "Johnny" into the big sleigh and started for Pittsfield, so as to be there when the bell "rings out" at half past seven. She left the team at Mary Pages in the East end of the village because the "old mare" was always frightened at the bell.

Then we walked down to Thorndike store. (Not Thorndike's Block), but a wooden building that stood farther west close to the pond, and when the bell began to ring Aunt Nabby seemed as animated as a child with a new rattle and when the bell stopped ringing she and Aunt Molly began to sing an old tune, Psalms such as they used to sing in the old "Strawberry Bank" Church. *This was the first time that I ever heard any such singing and it frightened me.*

As I had always been taught that it was a dreadful thing to sing out of doors. Aunt Nabby told me years afterwards that I looked as white as a ghost. As we started for home Aunt Molly said she wished she could see the old meetinghouse where "Brother Daniel" used to preach, and the graveyard where "Brother John" was buried, as she was so old that she never expected to see Epsom again.

So mother drove up the "Lane Road onto Catamount and we took a look at the old "Catamount" Meeting House unoccupied and inhabited only by mice, spiders, wasps and bats, a dilapidated old shell. (This old church stood at the four corners just north of Friends Cemetery), then we drove to the burying ground but the snow was so deep we could not go in.

After looking awhile we started for home. But on getting to Abram Greens (Reuben Lanes) we found there was no track from there to Friends meeting house. Rhoda Lollar? (Jame Lanes older sister) was popping corn in a long handled frying pan over the fire in the fireplace.

We ate a little popcorn, drank some cider, got warm and then took our back tracks to the old meetinghouse. Went down the "Furber Road" on the east side of the mountain to Batchelder's Corner then turned towards home. When we got to the "Rials Fogg" place (where Henry Jones lived last year) we found Cynthia Philbrick just starting out to go on foot to sit up with old Uncle Daniel. Eben Fogg lived there then, his wife was mother's cousin Minah Philbrick. Cynthia was another cousin from Hampton, who had come up with Aunt Nabby and Aunt Molly. She got into the sleigh and as we got to the pine woods all three began to sing. Aunt Nabby had a deep base voice, Aunt Molly a falsetto one and Cynthia a soprano. (I did not at *that* time know one kind of a voice from another) and the sound of the big old sleigh bells and their near and distant echoes among the trees, would accord fine with ones voice. And then another would occasionally give a tenor, or alto of their own, making what seemed to me then, the most beautiful melody imaginable.

I dreamed of it many times afterwards. When we got to Jake Peaslees Corner, mother thought that she would drive over to old Uncle Daniels and carry Cynthia, so we all went on.

When we got there Aunt Nabby and Aunt Molly concluded to stop there too. Thyphona Langley was there. I think she was (a niece of old Uncle John Pages.) and mother made arrangements with her to go over and do some spinning. (Stocking yarn) So we then Started for home going down by D. M. Philbricks across bear brook up to the road, then over the ledges, where a wood path had been broken, and got home about midnight to find all hands sitting up for us and grandmother quite frightened.

Father was broiling some pieces of fresh pork before the fire, for a lunch.

Your father then fifteen or sixteen years old was asleep in his chair leaning against the "boiler door" and grandmother was knitting.

As we had come from the west they had not heard us. Mother took the broiling sticks and cooked some more

meat and we all had a lunch and went to bed, but I could hear that singing and sleigh bell accompaniment all night long. So much for an old time aunt when I was a kid and mother was in her prime, but I shall never forget that music.

The letter is a copy of an old letter found in Epsom New Hampshire by George H. Yeaton, in the year 1962. He wrote:

"I am unable to find who wrote the letter, about the old bell, as it is not addressed to anyone or signed by the writer. Another letter probably accompanied this one."

"The writer, I would assume, was the one mentioned as "Johnny" in the letter. This history of the old bell was written in the year 1889, fifty-four years after the trip to Pittsfield village, to hear the old bell ring at seven-thirty in the evening. In making a copy of the letter I have had some difficulty, as it was written with a pencil and as one can see by the date it was written seventy-three years ago. But all names, dates and places I feel sure are correct."

"On the "Hill" was at the Thompson farm, later known as the William P. Babb Farm. Epsom, N.H. The boy fifteen or sixteen years old who was asleep in his chair leaning against the "boiler door" must have been Lewis Thompson, as he was born in the year 1819, and the narrative of the old bell and the trip to Pittsfield was in the year 1835 as that was the year that "Prophet Daniel" or "King Daniel" died."

"Daniel Philbrick, son of Daniel Philbrick died in Epsom."

"Arthur O. Friel, the son of Lucy L. Thompson, from on the "Hill", was the mother of Arthur O. Friel. She married George W. Friel and lived at Detroit Michigan. Arthur O. Friel was born in that city, May 31, 1885. Died at Concord, N.H. January 27, 1959 age 74 years. His wife Bessie G. Friel who survives him, lives in Concord, N.H. (1962). She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Knowlton of Manchester, N.H. Mr. Knowlton was a former Mayor of Manchester."

# **INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND OCTOBER MEETING TOPIC**



Tim Patterson of Pittsfield presented a most informative program on Indians of New England. Starting with where various Indians were located throughout New England about 1660, the talk eventually narrowed the focus to

how Epsom was directly effected by King Philip's and the French and Indian Wars. The talk was supplemented with a power-point presentation and Indian artifacts were displayed. A question and answer period followed the talk.

Prior to the program, a nominating committee was selected and refreshments followed the presentation.

## **ODDS & ENDS**

New to the Historical Association:

- Andy Kyle from Texas has sent newspaper clippings and photos about several Epsom World War II veterans.
- Carole Brown has donated "The Singer's Delight, a Collection of Songs, Glee's and Choruses" owned by Charles S. Bickford and used about 1895 with the Epsom Singing School.
- Photocopies of the Epsom related entries from the Diary of Rev. Arthur Caverno.
- Dick Frambach loaned a photo for scanning of what appears to be a Crawford Family reunion.
- The Epsom Early Settlers web site has changed its name and look to 'Epsom History'.
- Carole Brown continues to work on the new rail that will enclose the stairway to the basement.



## **MEETINGHOUSE SET ON FOUNDATION**

Work on the old 1861 Meetinghouse continues as it was lowered onto its new foundation. The lowering was done in mid-October in time for the NH Preservation Alliance to announce its new list of 'Seven to Save' structures for the next year at the site. The Meetinghouse project was number one on the list the previous year. The church is raised high enough for a walk-in entrance facing Route 4. The town has been awarded a Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant in the amount of \$191,000 to finish the restoration and upgrade the heat, plumbing and electrical work. Bravo to members of the committee for their work!

### **2007 Historical Association Officers**

President - Harvey Harkness

Vice President - Phil Yeaton

Secretary - Elsie Fife

Treasurer - Penny Yeaton

email - epsomhistory@aol.com

**Visit us online [www.epsomhistory.com](http://www.epsomhistory.com)**