

EPSOM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION N E W S L E T T E R

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Meetings Resume October 1 - 2:30 pm

The Epsom Historical Association resumes its meetings Sunday, Oct. 1, 2000 at the IOOF Hall, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Our guest will be David Nielson of Gilmanton, NH, who will present a video and talk about maintaining the Old Man of the Mountain. He used to work with his father and now continues the work. It is a family affair as his son is now working with him. They inspect and reinforce the Old Man as necessary to preserve the state's most famous landmark. This is a very timely program as our state quarter has just been released this month with the Old Man on the back side of the coin. This is the only two headed coin ever minted.

New Hampshire was the ninth and pivotal state which ensured that the United States would indeed become an independent nation.

Don't miss this breath-taking video and vivid oration of a wonderful preservation project. There will also be a surprise at the end of the program.

Short Falls

Cooperative Company Finishes Ice Cutting

Special to the Union

SHORT FALLS, Feb. 22 (1934) - Ice cutting operations have recently been completed by the New Rye Ice Company on the pond on Deer Brook for the 37th consecutive season. This company was formed in 1897, by neighbors then living in New Rye, as a cooperative venture, whereby they might cut ice for themselves and sell any surplus for the company profit.

A leader in the enterprise was Charles Sumner Hall, who then owned the property in New Rye through which Deer Brook runs. In October 1897, he gave the company a deed, insuring them in perpetuity, the privilege of maintaining a dam and flooding the land from November 1 to April 1; with the right to cut ice and make repairs on the dam whenever necessary. The deed included a right of way to the dam. This property has since passed through the hands of Elmore L.J. Pierce and is now owned by Leon Jaworski.

Years before the formation of the ice company, a sawmill with an old fashioned up-and-down saw operated on Deer Brook near the New Rye road. This mill had an upper dam which was rebuilt for the use of the New Rye company.

The cost of building the dam was met by selling shares in the company. The company also owned two ice plows. It was cut and sold at cost to shareholders. If the company sold ice to other customers, the surplus income was divided among the shareholders; if expenses or cost of repairs mounted, they were assessed.

Fred C. Fife was president of the company for many years. Old residents of Epsom will recognize the names of the early shareholders; John Perkins, George Dowst, Charles Dow, James H. Tripp, Henry Haynes, John Henry Dolbeer, J. Calvin Brown, Frank Richer (Ricker), Charles Foss and Warren Brown were among the members, as well as Fred Page, Anson B. Cass, George Cass, Norman H. Munroe and Walter J. Pickard, many of whom still use company ice.

Whenever property in New Rye was sold, it was usual for the membership in the ice company to go with the deed.

This year, for the first time, ice was cut with a power cutter. About 3,600 cakes, averaging 80 pounds each, were taken out at an estimated cost to shareholders of three cents a cake.



Club in Epsom Dedicates Old Muster Field

Mrs. Bunker Recalls Feats Of Heroes of Revolutionary War

EPSOM, Oct. 30, (1937) - The part that local Revolutionary war soldiers played in winning American freedom was told by Mrs. Loelle M. Bunker, in an address prepared for delivery this afternoon at the dedication of a granite marker on the site of the "Old Muster Field," once used by these men.

The granite shaft was erected by the Epsom Woman's club. The Rev. John Mason was scheduled to give the invocation, and the dedication was to be given by Mrs. Emma D. Dowst, president of the club. Mrs. Alene C. Osborn, Miss Maxine Cross and Miss Roberta Cross were to sing.

Mrs. Bunker's address follows:

"The exact date of the forming of the first company of militia in Epsom is not known; but we are told that the men met for drill some time before the Revolutionary war. The long continued French and Indian wars proved to be a good school for these hardy pioneers. The rough scouting life had made them bold and reckless and very skillful marksmen. This old Muster Field was a part of the farm owned by the first McClary who settled in Epsom in 1738. He is said to have owned several thousand acres of land. He had a large family of children, among them Andrew McClary Jr., afterwards Major Andrew McClary. This son built a house across the road from the original McClary homestead. He was fond of military tactics and had a large share in the warlike spirit of the times. His house was a spacious three-story building, and was tavern, store, postoffice and express office combined. It was here that many military characters met and discussed the very important subject that was arousing the country at that time. They were looking for war, and were preparing for it by drilling on this Muster Field.

Signal For Men. "The battle of Lexington was the signal, for which they were waiting. Fires were lighted on a thousand hilltops. Messengers rode, we are told, 'with the speed of the wind' through every town calling to arms. When the news reached Exeter, one of these messengers started for Nottingham, thence to Deerfield Parade and then on to Epsom. Andrew McClary was plowing in this very Muster Field when a 'swift rider, blowing a horn' brought him the news. Immediately he left his plow in the furrow, armed himself and started for Deerfield. Thirty-three other men from this town went with him. They came from blazed trails and crooked roads, but they had their guns and powder horns. They reached Nottingham about 1 o'clock. They were in Haverhill at sunset, having walked 26 miles in six hours. They stopped at Andover for supper and then started on a night march. On the morning of April 21, 1775 at sunrise, they were parading on Cambridge Common. Evidently they had no uniforms when they started on this march, as history says that some wore broadtailed black coats, worsted stockings and three-corned hats; others were dressed in homespun, but all were wearing long stockings, knee and shoe buckles and heavy cowhide boots. At that time the towns of Nottingham, Deerfield, Epsom, Northwood, Chichester and Pittsfield made up the 12th regiment."

Killed at Bunker Hill. "It is a well known fact that Maj. Andrew McClary was killed on the field of Bunker Hill, from a stray bullet after the battle was supposed to be over. James Harvey McClary succeeded his father as taverner, farmer and merchant. He had great influence in the organization of the 18th Regiment, and was one of its first commanders. This regiment was made up of men from the same towns as the 12th, with the exception of Chichester. It would seem that the company made up of Epsom men some-

times drilled near the Center schoolhouse, because there is a company order issued to a man in 1833 instructing him to meet for parade near the East Meeting House which formerly stood at that location. All the companies of the regiment met to drill each May on the third Tuesday and more often if the captain thought necessary and issued orders to that effect. If any man failed to appear at any training he was fined \$3 for each muster, and \$2 for each company inspection. In a copy of the old laws of New Hampshire, printed in 1842, it says that color and fashion of the uniforms of the officers of the infantry shall be decided by the commander-in-chief; but those of the artillery, cavalry and riflemen were to be chosen by the field officers. All staff officers who had a rank given to them were to be armed with a sword and a pair of pistols, be furnished with a suitable horse, saddle, bridle, mail pillion, valise, boots and spurs. All privates were armed with a flintlock and two spare flints. Each officer, musician and private who was fully equipped and who performed all the duties required by law received in the month of October each year, \$1 from the selectmen of the town."

Stirring Sight. "What a stirring sight it must have been to watch these men on parade. Can you see them in their gay uniforms with plumes waving, the officers with their swords flashing in the sunlight and the horses of the cavalry prancing to the music of fife and drums! The selectmen of each town and place were required to pay each officer, non-commissioned officer, musician and private of their respective towns, who were on duty at a regimental muster, the sum of 50 cents, to be there paid on parade. Presumably this was to pay for their dinner. Legend has it that immense gingerbreads were on sale, with 'good old-fashioned rum' to wash it down. It would seem that 'Muster Day' was looked forward to with great pleasure and the boys could hardly wait until they were old enough to don a uniform and carry a gun."

"This old Muster Field is still with us, but the men who drilled here have long since passed beyond. To honor their memory this granite marker has been erected by the Woman's Club of Epsom, so that future generations may know the location of this historical spot."

"The night dew that falls and in
silence doth weep

Shall brighten with verdure the
graves where they sleep;

And the tear that we shed, tho' in
secret it rolls

Shall long keep their memory
fresh in our souls."

NOTES AND OTHER ITEMS

Thanks to Nancy Claris and Charlie Yeaton for hosting this year's Ice Cream Social - and to all the volunteers who helped us out at Old Home Day.

Looking for information on Daniel Ansel Clough (1842-1873), probably born and died in Epsom. He is credited with a Civil War portrait which hangs in the State House in Concord. He is buried in the Gossville Cemetery with his parents and sister, Rosilla (Clough) Heath. No other paintings are known, and it is possible he was not a portrait painter, but perhaps worked painting with the manufacturer of the Concord Coach (Abbott Downing) or similar company.

News Items in this Newsletter are from one of the scrapbooks of Helen Lombard, donated by Jennie Cass.