



Epsom Historical Association

NEWSLETTER

Catch up to the Past Sept. 2008 No. 4

General John Stark, An American Hero Sunday, September 21, 2:00 Old Town Hall



The Epsom Historical Association is pleased to present for its September meeting,

Richard Wright, who will present an entertaining impersonation of General John Stark, a genuine hero of the American Revolution. Mr. Wright is a member of the New Hampshire Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and has received accolades for his presentation of the character and personality of the legendary John Stark. Stark, who led New Hampshire's efforts from Bunker Hill through the American Revolution, has several complete biographies which contain some of the finest insight into the young colonies fight against 'the common enemy.' The event is open to the public and will be preceded by a short business meeting and followed with refreshments.

CALENDAR DRAW FOR CASH MAJOR FUNDRAISER FOR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Epsom Historical Association is readying to kick off its first major fundraiser. 500 tickets will be offered for a donataion of \$10.00 each during October and November for a daily drawing for cash during the month of December. A cash drawing will be held for each day of December from the 500 sold tickets, and each ticket will be eligible for every drawing. The amount drawn each day will range from a minimum of \$50 dollars to a maximum of \$250 for Christmas Day and New Years Eve. The ten dollar tickets will be made available at select locations in Epsom, and are available from members. Each donation will have the option to include a one year's membership in the Epsom Historical Association.

DECEMBER 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 \$100.00	2 \$50.00	3 \$100.00	4 \$50.00	5 \$50.00	6 \$100.00
7 \$50.00	8 \$50.00	9 \$50.00	10 \$100.00	11 \$50.00	12 \$50.00	13 \$100.00
14 \$50.00	15 \$50.00	16 \$50.00	17 \$100.00	18 \$50.00	19 \$50.00	20 \$100.00
21 \$50.00	22 \$50.00	23 \$50.00	24 \$100.00	25 \$250.00	26 \$50.00	27 \$100.00
28 \$50.00	29 \$50.00	30 \$50.00	31 \$250.00			

DR. A.P. CHESLEY'S 1899 Old Home Day Address - Epsom's Early Physicians

Fellow Citizens. Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tennyson has said:

"It is a beautiful belief that ever round our head,
Are hovering on angel wings the spirits of the dead."

And I believe today the dear old souls of Epsom's past physicians are mingling with us in this celebration, perhaps it is as much a home week for the spirits of the aid as it is for us. We can fancy them gazing at the well-remembered hills and dales, the often travelled roads, the ripening harvest, the green and fertile fields, and all the old familiar scenes where they have lived and loved and worked. And perchance the lines of Longfellow come to them when he says "And in thought I go up and down the streets of that dear old town. And my lost youth comes back to me." It is an undisputed fact that in all ages, as we are informed by history, tradition, and song, that the doctor's calling is the most important of all the vocations of man. He is looked up to; he is appealed to on all matters as guide, philosopher and friend. Not even the minister gets so near the hearts of all to cheer and comfort as the village doctor.

"He is a man to all the country dear, And passing rich on forty pounds a year."

There was no medical organization or association in the State for more than half a century after the town was settled. And information in regard to the earlier physicians is extremely limited. **Stephen Sweat** was the first physician of Epsom. He was followed by **Obediah Williams**, who was active in the affairs of the town, and was one of a committee of three to treat with the Rev. Mr. Tucke, in 1773. He also served as a surgeon in the Revolutionary War.

The doctor of the present time, who drives in his carriage over our roads, rides in his automobile, or in the electric cars, or makes his way from place to place by railroad train, knows but little of the hardships and dangers of these early days. There were in most instances no roads, and the physician on horseback, or more frequently on foot, was obliged to make his way by means of spotted trees.

These were indeed pioneer times but the records show that they did not interfere with excellent professional services.

The next physician was **David L. Morrill**, born in Epping, New Hampshire, 1772, June 10, son of the Rev. Isaac Morrill and Anna Lawrence. Few men in the State ever occupied more numerous and important offices than Dr. Morrill did. Educated at Washington, Mass., and Exeter Academy, he studied medicine and began to practice in this town in 1793, and continued to practice till 1800, when he became so deeply imbued with religious ideas, that he studied for the ministry, and in 1802 was ordained pastor of a church in Goffstown, but resigned his pastorate in 1811 and resumed the practice of medicine. He was representative to the General Court, 1808-1816 and in 1816 was speaker of the house, and at this session was chosen to the senate of the United States for six years. In 1823 he was elected State senator and was president of that body. He was elected Governor by the legislature and the three following years elected governor by the people. In 1825 he had thirty thousand, one hundred and sixty seven votes out of thirty thousand seven hundred and seventy which were cast. He received the honorary degrees of A.M. and M.D. from Dartmouth college, and L.L. D. from the University of Vermont. Various minor offices were held by him and there are various publications and addresses in existence. He married for his first wife, Jane Wallace of this town, Sept. 25, 1794, who died in December 14, 1823, leaving no children. The following June, 1824, he married for his second wife, Lydia Poor of Goffstown, by whom he had four sons, three of whom survived him. In 1831, he moved to Concord, after which time he did not engage in public life, and at the time of his death, June 27, 1849, was a member of the South Church. The State claims him as an honored public official. The ministry claims him as one of her soundest theologians and the medical fraternity claims him as one of her most distinguished members. **Samuel Morrill**, brother of David Lawrence Morrill, was born in Epping, July 12, 1779, received his education in the public schools of the town and in 1794 became a clerk in a general store. Through the influence of his brother in 1796, he entered Exeter Academy, afterward studied medicine with his brother in Epsom, and Dr. Josiah Bartlett of Stratham, NH. He was examined by the

censors of the New Hampshire Medical society in 1800. He commenced the practice of medicine in the town of Salisbury in the spring of 1800, but in a few months, came to Epsom and took the place of his brother, who gave up the practice of medicine to study for the ministry. He continued his practice here till 1819. He was town clerk during the nineteen years of his stay in Epsom and selectman for seven years. He was a man strong in judgment, simple in treatment, skillful in application. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical society. He moved to Concord in 1819. In 1826, he received the honorary degree of M.D. from Dartmouth college, was justice for the court of sessions for the county of Rockingham 1821, register of deeds and judge of probate for Merrimack County 1823-1828; 1829 treasurer of New Hampshire branch of Educational society; 1830, treasurer New Hampshire Savings Bank. He was a deacon of the First Congregational Church of Concord.

Josiah Crosby followed Dr. Samuel Morrill. He received his education under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. Hidden of Tamworth, New Hampshire, and afterwards attended school at Fryeburg and Amherst Academies. He attended three courses of lectures at Hanover, being the last year a pupil of Dr. Nathan Smith. He practiced in Sandwich for two years, when he moved to Meredith Bridge, and in 1818 was practicing in Deerfield. Coming here in 1819, he remained until 1825 when he removed to Concord. In 1828 he removed to Lowell, Mass., where he held various offices in the town and city governments of Lowell. He was one of the founders of the Appleton Street church. In 1838 he again moved to Meredith Bridge, and in a short time moved to Manchester where he died in 1875, at the age of 81 years. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical Society and its president in 1850, and 1857 was elected vice president of the American Medical Association. Dr. Crosby was one of New Hampshire's noted physicians and surgeons. He invented many surgical appliances that are still in use. The records tell us that he did not protect these by letters patent, but gave them freely to the profession for the relief of human suffering, believing with the poet in the quality of mercy.

"It is twice blessed; It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

The next physician was **John Proctor**, born in Rowley, Mass., in 1781, of an old and distinguished

family and a brother of Benjamin Proctor, a noted physician of Massachusetts. The earlier years of his professional life were spent in Chelmsford, Mass. He came here about 1825 and remained till he died in 1837, aged 56 years. He was twice married, his second wife being Catherine L. Gray of this town. He is spoken of by the older residents of the town as an honorable, courteous Christian physician, and a skillful surgeon. He was a friend of the poor and needy. Although his professional career was not long, his patrons' who were numerous, had confidence in his ability and he was sincerely mourned by the people of the town at his death.

Dr. Stephen Gale was a native of East Kingston, born in 1799. He went to Raymond in 1824 and practiced there the most of the time till his death in 1846. During this time he practiced one year in East Kingston and later a short time in Gloucester, Mass. In 1833 he joined the New Hampshire Center District Medical society from Epsom. His stay in Epsom was short. He was a faithful, industrious and skillful physician, and had an extensive practice. He married Sarah Kimball of Gloucester, Mass., by whom he had two children, one of whom survived him.

Dr. Babb practiced here from 1837-1840, when he moved to Manchester, where he continued his professional work for a long term of years. He was a man honest of purpose, sincere in his motives and with kindness of soul. He studied with Dr. Josiah Crosby and at Philadelphia where he received his degree. He married Maria Lang of Epsom, and three children, one son and two daughters survive him.

Hanover Dickey was born in Epsom, Sept. 14, 1809. He was educated in the town schools and at Dartmouth College. He attended the first course of lectures at Hanover and the second at Boston, where he graduated. After receiving his diploma, he returned to his native town, and practiced successfully from 1840 till 1845, when he went to Lowell, Mass. Here he pursued his professional duties to the day of his death, May 29, 1873. Dr. Dickey was a man of superior judgment, retentive memory, well-posted in his profession, honorable and much esteemed by acquaintances, patrons and professional brethren.

Leonard Peabody came to this town in 1845 and remained till 1871. He was born in Newport, N.H., Sept. 18, 1817, the son of Ami and Sarah (Johnson) Peabody. He studied at Kimball Union Academy

and Concord Literary Institution, studied with Dr. Timothy Haynes of Concord, and Dr. John L. Swett of Newport, N.H., afterwards attending one course of lectures at Woodstock, Vt., where he received his degree of M.D., in June, 1844. After practicing for one year in Henniker, he came to Epsom. He was a member of the New Hampshire Medical Society, Center District Medical Society and of the New Hampshire Historical Society, a frequent contributor to periodicals, town clerk of Epsom, postmaster for ten years, member of the Legislature in 1885. He died at Henniker Jan. 13, 1899. He united with the church at the age of 16 and for sixty-five years was interested and active in all its work. No words of mine can add to the grandeur and simplicity of his life. He loved these hills and valleys, and the people that dwelt among them, never putting himself forward, still ever in the front from his inherent virtues, he stands as a bright and shining light to all who would win the reward for good and faithful services. In his professional work and in his public and private life he won universal respect and esteem, and he died rich in the grateful memories of those with whom he had come in contact.

Sullivan A. Taylor was born in Strafford, N.H., Jan. 19, 1839. He graduated from Bishop's College, Lenoxville, P.Q., and in 1866 began the study of medicine at Mt. Gill College, Montreal, where he graduated in 1870. He practiced his profession in Lenoxville, till 1872, when he came to Epsom and remained here four years. He then went to Concord, N.H., where he remained two years and then moved to Gilmanton where he is still located. He excelled in the practice of medicine, also in the department of surgery. He made himself familiar with the various improvements of the times, and was thoroughly impressed with the dignity and high importance of the medical profession. He was true to his chosen occupation and cultivated it with industry during his stay in Epsom.

Albion H. French, M.D., once a well known physician of Epsom, was born in Gilmanton, N.H., March 27, 1849, son of Thomas H. and Mary Ann (Brown) French. He was only three years of age when his father and mother died. He attended the academies in Pembroke and Pittsfield and the Northwood seminary. He fitted for college at the Gilmanton Academy, took a partial college course under the tutorship of Professor Avery of the Tilton Seminary. He graduated from the medical

department of the University of Vermont with the class of 1875. After that he pursued his medical studies in New York City. He was a delegate by substitution to the National Medical convention in New York City in 1880. The first eight years of professional life were spent in Epsom, N.H., from October 1875 to 1883. While in Epsom he gained a host of friends and built up a large practice. He was regarded as a skillful and reliable physician, and much sought for in all the adjoining towns. He moved to Leominster, Mass., in 1883. In 1892 he located in Pittsfield, N.H., and has since remained there. He has a large and lucrative practice and is highly esteemed by all.

Dr. M.F. Smith came to Epsom in 1883. He was born in Weare, N.H., and was a graduate of Dartmouth Medical College. He faithfully performed the duties of his profession for five years when poor health compelled him to give up his professional work. After six months of rest he located in Hampton, N.H., where he has acquired not only a large practice, but the esteem and respect of all with whom he comes into contact.

Dr. Roscoe Hill was born in Northwood, N.H., Oct. 9, 1856, son of Ivory B. and Eliza (Fogg) Hill. He received his education in the district schools and Coe's Northwood Academy and studied medicine at Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York, where he graduated in 1882. He practiced two years in Norfolk, Conn., three years in Lynn, Mass., and in 1887 came to Epsom, where he has since practiced. His cheerful smile, gentile countenance and his quiet sympathy are known to you all. I knew him as a faithful student, you know him as a thorough and skillful physician and as a citizen, who is always foremost in all that tends to the well-being of the community.

Such, briefly is the history of the doctors of Epsom. They were men of influence as well as physicians and occupied many positions of honor and trust, and many of them, who sought larger fields, attained a high position in their profession. They were men, whose duties did not exist only in the dispensing of drugs, but embraced a wider sphere, a broader field of action, services actuated by patriotism, humanity, kindness and love of all which was most ennobling and for the best interest of the community.

These acts of kindness and love have caused their memories to be transmitted to posterity. Daniel Webster fully appreciated this work when he said,

“If we work upon marble it will perish. If we work upon brass, time will efface it, if we rear temples they will crumble to dust, but if we work upon our immortal minds, if we imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and our fellowmen, we engrave on these tablets something that will brighten to all eternity.”

The old Epsom stock, it improves greatly on acquaintance. May it retain its identity and its integrity and continue to exert a somber and healthful influence in the shifting population through generations to come. No son of Epsom is or need be ashamed of the home of his fathers. The speakers of the day have told us of the town as she was and as she is, but she speaks for herself. New Hampshire has sent her sons into every State in the Union, and everywhere they have maintained a high standard of integrity and ability. To this number Epsom has furnished more than her full quota.

“Princes and lords may flourish and may fade. A breath can make them as a breath has made. But a good yeomanry, that country’s pride, When once, destroyed, can never be supplied.”

HISTORY - OLD HUCKINS BARN SITE NOT UNFAMILIAR WITH FIRES

The fire which partly destroyed the old barn at Gossville has an interesting history, and shows that through the years, fire was not a stranger to structures at that location. Only through various sources can an overview of the early history of the barns at this location be pieced together.

The property, before this area of town was called Gossville, belonged to Daniel Cilley, son of famed General Joseph Cilley of Revolutionary War note. It was here that Col. Daniel Cilley built his tavern prior to 1800, and where the first New Hampshire Turnpike passed in front by. There were few buildings in the area, save the District Cilley Schoolhouse and the tavern, barn and outbuildings. Town records show a license being granted “1799, May 2, Daniel Cilley has our approbation to have an open tavern in the of Epsom.” Newspaper accounts of December 1833 gives us news of the following

event: “On Sunday night last, three barns, with a stable and shed, belonging to Col. Daniel Cilley, of Epsom, were consumed by fire; supposed to have been set by an incendiary.” It is likely the barn was rebuilt, and about this same time, 1834, the Free Will Baptist Society erected its first structure on land likely provided by Col. Cilley.



Upon the death of Col. Cilley and his widow, the family sells the property in 1855 to William Goss. The Goss family, who prior to this resided in the Jug City area of Epsom, began the transformation of this area in to what later became known as Gossville. Goss moved several buildings to the area and constructed others. The original Free Will Baptist Church was moved to what was later the Gossville Store, and a new meetinghouse erected in 1861. Not long after Goss bought the Cilley Tavern, he ran the business as the Suncook Valley House. James Sherburne, who lived on the hill behind the Goss tavern, made mention of another fire in his diary: “Thursday, May 26, 1859 William Goss barn was burnt.” It is not known how extensive the damage was, but Mr. Sherburne at the end of June and the first of July that same year was paid for work ‘William Goss Dr one day on barn shingling.’

William Goss and family maintained the Suncook Valley House for nearly 40 years, and the heirs sold it to Chapin Osgood in 1894, with J. Goss holding the mortgage. Osgood began to run the establishment but ran into a bit of misfortune not long after. The source, the Epsom fire logs, gives the following information: ‘April 5, 1896, the wood barn

and stable of Chapin Osgood totally destroyed by fire of unknown origin, and the dwelling was partially damaged'. Osgood rebuilds, and leases part of the business to Charles J. Brown, a stage operator, but is finally unable financially to continue when the very next year, on August 15th 1897, 'lightning strikes and fire totally destroys the stable, and further partial damage done to the dwelling and hotel'. Osgood sells out, Charles Sumner Hall rebuilds the barn around 1900 and leases to Edgar F. White and Ezra Bennett, the old tavern which continues operation as the Gossville Hotel. In 1916, according to newspaper releases, "the large annex to the Gossville Hotel is nearing completion – a very attractive addition." Charles Sumner Hall renames the business 'Hotel Sumner' and owns the property until his death. From the barn and surrounding sheds, Charles Hall runs a cattle business along with his lumber operation, box shop, and was former partner in the Silver and Hall store.

The barn was later sold and was no longer a part of the Hotel and tavern facility. The barn remained the property of the Huckins family until recent years. A landmark for many years, arson set the structure once again ablaze on July 21 of this year.



Picture of Charles Sumner Hall and 57 two year old steers along with various horses. The barn can be seen in the upper right. Also pictured is a smaller stable behind the barn which no longer exists. Photo probably taken sometime after 1911. Charles S. Hall also had a small office which would be just to the right of this photo.

EAST STREET REVISITED

Historical Association Program
and Ice Cream Social
McClary Cemetery, Epsom, NH,
July 13, 2008

The site and surroundings we observe here today are quite different from its appearance when the town was established some 280 years ago. What we now call Center Hill Road has had several different names in the past, but it was originally called East Street; being that portion that ran from the Deerfield line east of here to this location. This area could in earlier times, have been considered the town center, for from here was easy access to the meetinghouse, the school, several stores and taverns, the parsonage, town pound and town common. In slightly later times there was the Union or vestry built by the Congregational Society; the local Doctor's house, who later went on to be Governor of New Hampshire; the home of the local lawyer; and one of the first town Post offices. In and around the area were the early farms and mills which helped sustain the population as it began to grow, later spreading to the outlying areas of Slab City, Gossville and New Rye.

It was in 1727 when the charter was made establishing the town; and the new lands were to be divided up between those residents of Greenland and New Castle

who paid taxes in 1723. In 1726, the parish of Rye was set off from Greenland, and those residents, as taxpayers in that community in 1723, were able to draw for lots as well. To get things going on a fast track, the following conditions had to be met.

1. That twenty families settle in what were called the 20 home lots, each fifty acres, and within 4 years have a dwelling house and have broken up at least three acres for planting within 5 years.
2. That a house be built for public worship within six years, that being 1733. And
3. That land be reserved for a parsonage, the first minister and a school.

There was a provision to extend the timeline by four years should war break out with the Indians. They were to establish a government, electing constables and selectmen and they were to meet annually. Right away the tax payers of Rye, New Castle and Greenland, in addition to their current dwellings in those towns, had to support the building of the new town; paying its officials, surveyors, building a school and meetinghouse, and the annual quit rent to the Crown. With all of this, twenty people had to be found to occupy the first twenty home lots.

It took years for the proprietors to get the land surveyed and divided up. Committees

were made for purposes of laying out the first road, the home lots, and locating a place for the first meetinghouse.

1732 was the pivotal year. In June twenty men drew for the 20 fifty acre home lots. In October it was voted that there be a meetinghouse thirty feet long and twenty four feet wide, built immediately, with Joshua Brackett, William Locke and Theodore Atkinson a committee, and to find any person or persons who shall “do it soonest and cheapest.” The first road was built, and in January of 1733, the name of the street downward to Nottingham from said Meetinghouse was called East Street. One must assume that the meetinghouse was indeed built, as it is the marker for naming the road leading to it. Further evidence for this structure includes a proprietors meeting held at the Epsom Meetinghouse on May 4, 1743 – and, in the minutes of the June 1743 meeting, Mr. William Locke, a member of the committee to have the meetinghouse built, received “thirty-seven pounds five shillings towards building said meetinghouse as per his receipts.” Though no exact location was given for where this first meetinghouse of 1732 was built, it would come to light in later proprietor’s minutes. All the next meetings of the proprietors were out of town, with the next meeting here at the home of John Blake in 1750.

About this same time, the proprietors of Canterbury were granted permission to lay out a road, four rods wide through the town, as near West North West.

And so it began, James Seavey, Richard Goss, Thomas Berry, Daniel Lunt, Noah Seavey, William Locke, Samuel Dowst, Zachariah Berry, Ebenezer Berry, Solomon Dowst, Samuel Wallace, William Wallace, John Blake, Josiah Foss, Simon Knowles, Paul Chapman, Joseph Locke, Jotham Foss, Jedidiah Weeks and James Marden drew their home lots. Records do not allow us to know all those who actually followed through and settled here. Some of the land changed hands soon after they were drawn – other members of these families may have begun to settle and others soon sold their home lots.

In November of 1732, the remaining proprietors drew their respective lots – 47 from New Castle, 33 from Rye and 63 from Greenland. Early in 1733, surveyors set out to lay out each of the proprietor's share of land. By this time Epsom was only a 4 by 6 mile patch of woods with 20 outlined home lots, one road and a meetinghouse – and oh yes, one resident family. Charles McCoy had found himself some nice land and settled his family upon it. Found out, the constable Paul Chapman was to serve him a warning out. It was short lived, as McCoy was able to procure land rightfully by 1735. Apparently he

may not have been the only such squatter, as the proprietors voted to prosecute “sundry persons, without leave or license got in upon sundry tracks of land.”

There is little in the minutes of proprietor's meetings during this time to give us much information as to how the town grew, or which families were trying to settle. From deeds and other documents, we do know the following:

That a committee was formed to build a saw mill in 1736 to supply the town's people with boards for ten years.

That there was a blockhouse by June of 1736.

It is written in some of the various short histories of the town that the first white male to be born in Epsom was William Blake, son of John Blake and Jemima Locke. This establishes this Blake family as one of the earliest settled families, but as to the first male born in Epsom? His obituary says “3-28-1829 WILLIAM BLAKE - In Wakefield, Mr. William Blake, aged 84; he was born in Epsom, in 1741, and was the 2nd male child born in that town. He was a soldier in the old French war and in the war of the Revolution.” So, then who was the first? This family left Epsom about 1749 for Barrington.

A John Blake drew original home lot #13. During this early period he lived on home

lot No. 3 and also bought home lot #4. By 1759 his son Thomas was living on that lot #3 and son Dearborn on home lot #4. The elder John Blake is supposed to have died in Epsom; his son Thomas later moved to Chichester; his son Dearborn moved to Epping, selling the lot to Thomas, who then sold it to a cousin Jethro Blake. Son Samuel bought lot No. 14 in 1742, and this property has remained in the family ever since, currently the home of the Nutter. The Blake's held numerous town offices, and are indeed one of the earliest families.

We know by deed from his father, Samuel Wallace of Rye, that George Wallace was living on home lot #11 by 1741. This lot was later Babb and Griffin homes, and currently that of the Stewarts. About 1739 he had married Margaret, the daughter of Andrew McClary. Since the Wallace's were from Rye, we can assume George met her during his time in Epsom, which helps place the McClary family in town. Samuel's son William Wallace by 1742 owned home lot #6, with the parsonage lot on the West and land of Joshua Berry on the east.

It has to be noted that there was some shuffling of the lot numbers early on. The reason is not clear, nor is there any written documentation how or why it was done, but in looking at the 20 home lots, space had to be made for the school and minister. Whether these were inserted and

that caused the re-numbering is not known for sure, but the last two westerly lots were added to the east end of home lots, those being numbers 10 and 11. So the home lots were drawn consecutively, probably drawn up in numerical order, but were changed. This has caused confusion through the years in various histories and deeds – so when researching, it helps to know who your neighbor was to help identify where families were living. And this brings us back to the McClary's.

Just when the McClary's arrived in Epsom is unknown. They purchased land in Nottingham in 1728, and he is mentioned in their records as working on laying a floor in the blockhouse there in 1729. He is elected a selectman in that town for 1733-1734, making him a resident there during those years. It is also mentioned that the McClary's may have built a stockade or blockhouse in Epsom, and is perhaps the one mentioned in the records of the History of Gilmanton as being in town in 1736. Certainly they were around enough for George Wallace to marry Andrew's daughter Margaret around 1739. In any event, Horace McClary in his book on the family, places the family on home lot #2 in 1738. Oldest son John and his wife established a home across East Street from his father in 1741 on one half of home lot #19.

More research needs to be done on the Berry family of Epsom. Joshua Berry appears on deeds in this early period on home lot #5. John Mark Moses, whose 4 part history of the Early Settlers of Epsom states that “the French war of 1745-1749 was the great interruption in Epsom’s history and caused a complete desertion of the town at one time. The McCoy’s, McClary’s, Wallace and Blakes were probably the only families of that period that became permanent residents. It is likely that the Locke, Berry and Allen families were represented.” Indeed, Andrew McClary was back in Nottingham in August of 1744, having taken the Epsom town book of records with him.

On August of 1747, Isabella McCoy was captured by the Indians.

Following the French and Indian War, the activity and the growth of the town picked up at a feverish pace. In 1749 Thomas Blake petitioned to be an Inn Keeper. The proprietor’s renewed efforts to raise money for the support of the Gospel. Andrew McClary is now called ‘Inn Keeper’ and the elder McClary by 1757 is sick, weak in body, and makes out his will. With few exceptions, the proprietors meetings during the 1750’s are held at McClary’s Inn. In 1759, Charles McCoy petitions for a license to “keep a tavern of place of public entertainment for all sorts of social liquors. The next year he sells to

the Sanborns, who in 1761, have been approved by the Selectmen of Epsom to “keep a house of entertainment for horse and man and travelers in said Epsom.”

Though the town was growing quickly, the town still had no minister, and the original meetinghouse had disappeared sometime before the end of the French and Indian War. The proprietors addressed the issue in August of 1761 while they were courting Rev. John Tucke to be the minister. The records state, “that the meetinghouse shall stand on the same lot where the old meetinghouse formerly stood, at or near the burying place.” Again, another confirmation of an original meetinghouse. Finally, on September 23, 1761, Rev. John Tucke is ordained as Epsom’s first minister, fulfilling part of the original charter. Rev. Tucke settles in Epsom and buys outright the 50 acre parsonage or ministers lot. He later buys the 50 acre adjoining lot to the east. Though it was discussed in 1761 to build a new meetinghouse, it was not built until 1764, length fifty feet and forty feet wide. After it was built, pews were sold, and the list of purchasers gives us a good look at the families in town – those being:

Samuel Blake

Samuel Jackson

Benson Ham

Richard Tripp

John McGaffey

Thomas Blake

William Blake

Eliphalet Sanborn

Nathan Marden

Benjamin Blake

Isaac Libbey

John McGaffey

John McClary Esq.

Capt. Andrew McClary

George Wallace

Exactly where the old meetinghouse stood has been a mystery. It is never mentioned in any old deeds, though the monument places it here (though the monument also states it is the site of the first meetinghouse built in 1764, for which we now there was an earlier one at the same location). The cemetery here is mentioned as a boundry in deeds; and one map shows it kind of set in the road. Looking around the cemetery, it is apparent that the meetinghouse actually stood in the current bounds of the cemetery – as originally the cemetery had no walls.

Mary L. Cass, in some remarks states the following from her recollection of the old meetinghouse:

“It was a large square building with three outside doors – one facing the South, the front door; one on the East and another on the West; each of these doors entered directly into the meeting room; no entries or halls. The young women and girls usually went out for a stroll in the graveyard just back of the church.”

Based in part on her description, researching the selling of pews and other information, George Yeaton came up with a plot of the interior of the old meetinghouse.

It was also at this time when the proprietors started discussing the building of a school, with a bid going to Ensign McGaffey at 312 OT to raise board shingle clapboard and stone. On April 19, 1766, a note in the records shows that a meeting be moved from the meetinghouse to the schoolhouse and carried on there, giving us an approximate date for the first schoolhouse. It is interesting to note that on a hand made map of the area shows a school house, perhaps later, between the old McClary house and the Stewarts on the east end of old East Street. Also during this time, discussions began on possible fencing of the old burying ground. The census of 1773 gives a good indication of the population and how it had grown from 36 polls just 13 years earlier.

Unmarried Men from 16 to 60 - 18

Married Men from 16 to 60 - 53

Boys 16 years and younger - 86

Men 60 years and upwards - 1

Females unmarried - 109

Females Married - 53

Widows - 4

Male Slaves - 1

Female Slaves - 1

TOTAL 327

After the Revolution, if you stood outside the old meetinghouse, you would see across the street the schoolhouse (the current building was constructed in the 1880's); You could see Squire Merrill's store and residence; Capt. Heath's Tavern, site of traveling zoo's and probate courts; Babb's store and the Post Office at James Harvey McClary's place; the home of David Lawrence Morrill and later his brother Samuel, both Doctors, and one later Governor of the State; the parsonage, the town common, the town pound, all just across East Street. Also, about 1825, the Union Hall or Vestry built by the Congregationalists while the town no longer by law could support a minister. For a time the new Baptist Society and Congregationalists alternated between the school and the meetinghouse – not unlike

when the Meetinghouse doors were nailed shut during Rev. Tucke's tenure. From here also are the graves of many of the early settlers of Epsom – soldiers, ministers, doctors and prominent players of the town's past. Many unmarked, and the oldest readable stone from 1771. The earliest known burial of William Blazo in 1761, though there were probably more dating perhaps back to the first meetinghouse. The street was lined with elm trees, planted by residents before the Civil War, and thus for a while East Street was seen in picture post cards as Elm Street. Later other stores, cobbler shops, the John C. Hall house, the Carter place and many other fine homes have come and gone. East Street was walked by many people from its earliest citizens, to countless soldiers and patriots who fought in the Revolution and Civil War, politicians, doctors, lawyers, business men, clergymen, merchants, farmers – all part of Epsom's heritage, and it started here, one road from which our town emerged. (below, meeting at McClary cemetery)





PHOTO SLEUTHING

When browsing through the 2200 photos in the Historical Association's archives, you never know when something might catch your eye. There is a photo of Charles and Helen E.P. Steele celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary at their home on Center Hill. In the background, hangs a portrait – but of whom? After several inquiries, the portrait arrived at the old library, compliments of Dick Frambach. With no identification, other than the name of Charles Steele, it was assumed perhaps this was perhaps his father. The portrait was taken out of its frame, and still no identification. The picture was photographed for the archives, though there was no proof of the identity of the man in the photo. While browsing through the many albums, another photo popped up, and exact match for the unknown portrait. James A. Yeaton, father of Helen E.P. Yeaton (Steele) was an exact match. [Left, portrait; right, photo]



CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS

No. 28

Granny Howe Cemetery



Granny Howe Road

Lake

[Benjamin Lake](#), Died June 25, 1893 AE. 81 ys 2 ms

[Mary L., \(Saturley\)](#) His Wife Died Feb. 10, 1891 AE. 75 ys 1 mo 29 ds.

Mason

[Jonathan Mason](#), Co. E. 18th N.H. Inf.
[Sarah M. \(Lake\) Mason](#) [Mother] 1843–1911

[Walter](#), Son of J. & S. Mason, Died Jan. 18, 1884 AE. 9 y'rs 6 mo.

[L. \(Lendall\) Harley](#), son of George W. & Minnie R. Mason, Born Sept. 12, 1893. Died Ict. 13, 1899.

Osgood

[Jennie H.](#), Dau. of F.E. & M.E. Osgood, Died July 26, 1872. AE. 5 mo's. 8 d's

Robey

[Sergt. G.H. Robey](#) Co. B, 46th Mass. Inf. 6 unmarked graves (old fieldstones in this row)

ONLINE PHOTO ARCHIVES HAS NEW FORMAT

After giving the old Epsom Early Settlers an entirely new look and name (epsomhistory.com), the photo albums and scrapbooks has been restructured and given a new format. The old albums had rather cryptic links, hard to find descriptions, and multiple small photos per page with a somewhat complicated return when trying to search people or places. All that has changed. After several months of work and new code by Mike Jacobs, all the photos have been re-uploaded in larger file sizes, each with new thumbnails and captions. In addition, a new search engine has been used to better refine results when looking for a particular person or place. The new photo archives include the following:

- * 2200 photos in 48 albums
- ** A new table design to choose albums
- *** 12 New Albums/hundreds of new photos
- **** New Thumbnail images in each album
- ***** Click thumbnails for larger images
- ***** Search box available on every page
- ***** Navigation links on each page

All images are printable, but are no longer available to copy or download with a right click. To view the new format, visit www.epsomhistory.com and click on *photo archives*.

2008 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

WEB WATCH

www.quimbycentral.com

During the past spring, Paul Brown of Candia contacted Epsomhistory.com and Dee McNeil of Texas, willing to share photos from several albums handed down to his family. The photos were of his Quimby, Bickford and Brown ancestors. For a couple months the photos were scanned, and fortunately, many were identified.

Among the photos were a Peter Bickford, and Rev. John Manson Quimby, son of Timothy Quimby of Deerfield. Some of this line descends into Epsom families. To view the fascinating old photos, log onto Dee McNeil's www.quimbycentral.com and click on the Photo Albums link at the bottom of the page. [below left, Rev. John Manson Quimby; right, Peter Bickford]



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:

- *The last in the series of speeches from Epsom's first Old Home Day. Dr. A. P. Chesley's remarks on early Epsom physicians.*
- *Fire not unfamiliar to Huckins Barn site - a brief history.*
- *East Street Revisited, text of the program given at the July Ice Cream Social.*
- *Photo Sleuthing, matching unknown portrait for identification.*
- *Cemetery Inscriptions, Granny Howe Cemetery*