

Canaan Historical Society and Museum 2010 Annual Report

The 2010 Season was a busy one at the museum. We opened on July 3 and closed on November 3, with several special openings. Our visitors from the area, across the country and abroad numbered 276. On Friday, June 4, we had 74 fourth graders "from Canaan Elementary School along with their teachers and volunteers participate in our local observance of New Hampshire Day at the museum and the Old Meeting House. New Hampshire Day is a re-enactment of Colonial days where the students dressed for the occasion; They were very interested in the articles in the museum used by our early settlers. Several of these young people are descendants of Canaan's first families and are eager to learn about our town's history. Our historian, Donna Zani-Dunkerton had another busy year doing research for families from West Virginia, Arizona, California, Washington, Texas, Florida New Hampshire and Massachusetts. She also put together copies of old photos and genealogy on Alton Webster, who was killed during the D-Day Normandy Invasion during World War II. Copies of old photos and genealogy were also prepared for Shirley Morrison of Clinton Connecticut. She is 86 years old and is the grand daughter of James Strain who owned large holdings of mica interests in Grafton, Groton and Orange. Mr. Strain also owned and operated the Canaan Inn from 1917 to 1940. The inn burned in 1977 and was located where the Canaan Post Office is today. Last spring two pillars were replaced on the front of the museum building along with a new floor for the upstairs porch. We owe a special thanks to historic society member John Bergeron for his efforts in coordinating this important project.

On July 19, the society presented a program on the Northern Railroad by Ken Cushing of Grafton with over 65 people in attendance. This program presented the early history of railroading in the area. Thanks also goes out to Dan Fleetham Jr. for producing and distributing an excellent flyer for the event. During the 2010 season our historian and secretary undertook a lengthy project. Donna Dunkerton and Carol Bergeron inventoried the entire collection of artifacts in the museum. We all owe a very special thanks to them for their many hours contributed to this undertaking. Again this year the society was given several items. A very nice display was brought to the museum by Stephen and Carolyn Freese.

The Norman Neily family donated another display case and numerous odds and ends of glassware. We received from the Brownell family of Danbury, NH a small souvenir booklet from the Canaan Center School. The booklet is dated 1921-22 and lists Irene Lynch as the teacher and our historical society president Dan Fleetham Sr. as one of her students. Our historian has compiled numerous clippings, laser prints of Canaan pictures and other items of interest which have been added to our archives. The year 2011 is important to Canaan and 11 other Middle Grant Towns in the Upper Valley. We were all chartered in 1761 and this summer we will celebrate 250 years in coordination with the Upper Valley 250 (UV 250) celebration. It was in August, 1911 that the old photos of our town fathers were placed in the entry of the Old North Church. They have hung there for almost a century and will have a fresh face for our 2010 Old Home Days.

It is hard to believe it has been 50 years since the Centennial in 1961. It was at that time the Historical Society and Museum were organized. The present Old Home Day Committee began their career in 1981 with a Street Dance on Depot Street that lasted all night! The music was provided by Charlie and the Tuners, who played on the porch of the former Roger Remacle home. Wouldn't it be great to hear Charlie and the gang again after 30 years? Although the New Hampshire History Day first began in May of 1984 at the Canaan Elementary School under the direction of Nancy Snyder, the 2011 event will be the 20th year the fourth graders have held their Colonial Reenactment Day in the Historic District at the Museum and the Old Meeting House. And it has been nearly 20 years since the Canaan High School Alumni Association was formed under the guidance of Gracie Stebbins and her merry band of helpers... Yes! Canaan will celebrate this summer. Come join us!

Respectfully submitted, Daniel W. Fleetham Sr., Chairman Edward Lary, Vice-Chairman Carol Bergeron, Secretary Reggie Barney, Treasurer Donna Zani-Dunkerton, Historian and Corresponding Secretary