

NEW HAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2014-15 PROGRAMS  
Theme: *Our Heritage*

Programs are held @7:00pm at the Gordon-Nash Library

**September 18, 2014: Songs of Yesteryear** Presenter Dr. Robert Swift was Pemi Choral Director for 37 years and is joined by Margot Swift, an accomplished pianist. We will explore music from long ago with recordings and audience participation in sing-alongs. Coordinator: Carole Curry

**October 23, 2014: Stories of Our Town: New Hampton, Part II** 22 elders were interviewed for the NHHS Oral History project and told stories about life in our community. In Part II, residents will tell stories revealing values that shaped the character of our town. Coordinators: Pat Hoertdoerfer and Gordon DuBois

**November 13, 2014: A Walk Back in Time: The Secrets of Cellar Holes** Northern New England is full of reminders of past lives: stone walls, old foundations, forest growth reclaiming a dooryard. Presenter, Adair Mulligan. Coordinator: Bob Curry

**January 22, 2015: That Reminds Me of a Story** Presenter Rebecca Rule, author and humorist, is best known for her stories of New Hampshire characters. Audience members are invited to contribute stories of their own. Sponsored by New Hampshire Humanities Council. Coordinator: Gordon DuBois

**February 19, 2015: Story of New Hampton School, Then and Now** A panel of teachers, administrators and leaders of this great institution share their stories of educational challenges and triumphs and the school's enduring legacy. Coord. :Peter Gulick  
**March 26, 2015: Not in Front of the Children** "Once upon a time..." Where do fairy tales come from and what do they tell us about ourselves and history? Presenter Ingrid Graff discusses these tales. Sponsored by New Hampshire Humanities Council and the Gordon-Nash Library. Coord. : Manfred Hoertdoerfer  
**April 23, 2015: The Historic Art of Floor Coverings** During the 18th and 19th centuries, painted floor canvases decorated many New England homes. Presenter Lisa Mair is a master of this art and will share her designs. Coordinator: Carole Curry  
**May 21, 2015: The Shaker Legacy** Presenter Darryl Thompson, NHHC scholar, explores their ingenious contributions to music, agriculture, furniture, and social and religious thought. Sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council. Coordinator: Peter Gulick

*Our programs are free and open to the public.*

**NHHS 2014-15 Board of Directors**

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**Curator: Carole Curry**

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NEW HAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 422

NEW HAMPTON, NH 03256

Do you want to know more  
about the history of the town of  
New Hampton and support its  
educational programs and historic  
preservation efforts?

Visit our website to learn more  
or contact one of the board  
members.

NEW HAMPTON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



*The New Hampton Historical Society, established in 1945, is a not-for-profit educational organization, whose mission is to research and preserve the history of the Town of New Hampton through its collections of historical material and its buildings and to share the rich heritage of the town with residents, visitors and students through exhibits, programs, interpretation and preservation.*

*Newsletter*  
FALL/WINTER 2014 EDITION

President's Message  
Looking at History and the Future

"Looking at History and the Future" is what we try to do and both at the same time. We have been very active in recent years with our "Main Street" and "Oral History" projects and have continued with another extension of the oral history with our 2<sup>nd</sup> "Stories of our Town" program just this last month. We are forever grateful for the contributions of our elders and the participation of residents in these programs. Yet, much lies ahead for us. We have only begun with the transcriptions of the Oral History interviews, and once completed, we will be creating the editing part of

a comprehensive documentary video. We will try to find improved ways to display and make the vast amount of historic data in our museum more accessible to the public. And, the siding and roofing of our Museum Building on 30 Dana Hill will need attention in the near future.

We have enjoyed loyal support from our members and residents of the town and we look forward to continuing our service to our residents with interesting and exciting programs and projects in the future.

Manfred Hoertdoerfer, President

The Forgotten Story



On a Sunday afternoon, I met with Woody Thompson, the son of George Thompson, artist and painter of the Town House Curtain. George Thompson lived in Holderness and was known as "The Sign Painter". In World War II, he was a welder at the South Portland shipyards. He painted rail road box cars with the Old Man of the Mountain image and many signs and decorations at Clark's Trained Bears.. When Woody was graduating from Holderness School in 1964, his dad George painted an elaborate Coat of Arms for the school. It was stolen one week before graduation and is a great sadness, even to this day. Woody (in picture at left) had never seen this curtain before and was deeply moved to see it restored.

Carole Curry, Curator

*This was a fantastic project for the Town of New Hampton and the Historical Society. You can see the restored Town House and Grange curtains hanging in the Town House.*

# Passion's Prize - Rockledge Farm and Orchard

Authored by:  
Bernard L. Smith

New Hampton's Rockledge Farm, was a 237 year family heritage experience dating back to 1763. For 75 years, since 1925, the effort was exemplified by two overlapping plantings of apple trees and the nurturing of their lush root systems to sustain a fruitful abundance.

Perhaps, it was and is a journey both in reflection and anticipation of the true freedom our forefathers envisioned.



Oil Painting by George Loring of Thornton, NH

We have always respected this immaculate landscape snuggled on the southeast slope of Dana Hill, surrounded by the forested hub of New Hampshire's Lakes Region. Born in 1934, I was the youngest of five of the 7th generation to call Rockledge his home. For 45 years, my wife June Rose and I with our three children Deborah, Darlette and Glen, were the stewards of this farm. We filled our days with the joy of living the dream and influencing the perfection of apple quality. In January of the year 2000, a decision was made, with full knowledge of how different the days ahead would be in our journey with so many loyal customers and friends. Yes, there might have been regret in choosing to remove the apple orchard; but, like you, we must reflect with compassion on the experiences that have so beautifully defined our lives. The quality of the trees was the symbol of achievement and the harvest, a reward for diligence. All the folks with whom we shared that succulent perfection, were also the friends and neighbors that gave life its love and meaning.



*Bernard and June spend their winters in St. Petersburg, Florida and eagerly return in spring to their home, the historic and stately Merrow House, on New Hampton's Main Street. They are involved in many town activities and have been members of the Historical Society for many years. Bernard was the Past Master of both the New Hampton Subordinate Grange and the New Hampton Junior Grange. June is actively involved with the Garden Club and cooks the best baked beans for Old Home Day! They are a treasure trove of information from days gone by and Bernard has been interviewed for our Oral History project. Be well! We look forward to seeing you next May.*



## A SUMMER DAY AT THE MUSEUM



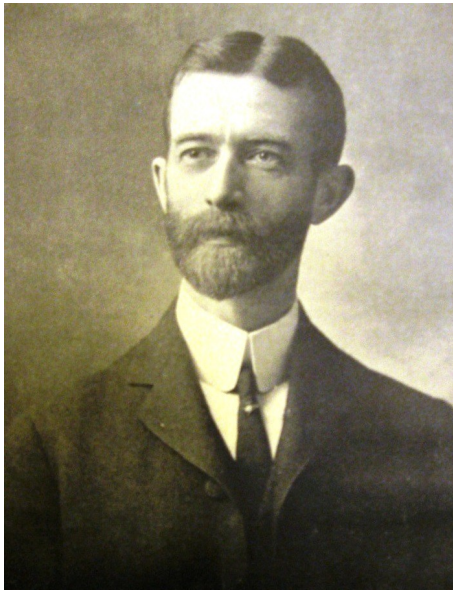
Have you visited our museum at 30 Dana Hill Road? We once more had several visitors this past Old Home Day, including families who had just moved to New Hampton and were eager to join the Society and learn about the history of their new town. Children are fascinated with the school room and the tools families used on the farm. Our curator, Carole Curry, is constantly updating our collections. The girls at left, granddaughters of NHHS president, Manfred Hoerdtorfer, excitedly donned outfits of days gone by and recited their “school lessons” of the day; Carole took the picture on right of a fourth grader, new to New Hampton, having such fun going through the costume basket and dressing up!



*Our Museum is open in Summer on Saturdays in July and August from 10:00AM to 12:00Noon. Visits may also be scheduled with our Curator, Carole Curry, by emailing: [newhamptonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:newhamptonhistory@gmail.com) or calling 744-9798.*

### A Local Boy Who Made Good—Charles Robie

**Excerpts from article by Dan Heyduk**



The Robie, or Roby, family were farmers in the Winona Road section of Meredith and New Hampton from the early 1800s. William Robie was born on the family farm in New Hampton in 1833, he married Harriet Chase, and they were living there when their second son Charles was born in 1866. Harriet died in 1872 from tuberculosis, a scourge in the days before antibiotics, and William later married Martha Walker in 1875. She was Charles’ stepmother beginning in his ninth year. Along with farming, William was the tax collector in New Hampton for many years and served in the legislature. Charles and his older brother Samuel worked on the family farm, walked to school down the road in Meredith, and were both interested in printing. Charles used a knife to whittle alphabet letters from scraps of wood, and inked them for printing, then made his own foot-powered scroll saw to cut out better ones. He also did wood-cut engraving, and produced some graphics that were printed and used by local businesses and newspapers. Charles even bought his own printing press. But it was Samuel who went into the newspaper business, working first at the “Grafton County Journal”, then starting his own “Meredith Review”, and later becoming editor of the Franklin “Journal Transcript”. Charles went to work at the American Express Company office in Plymouth,.

The express business had started simply when stagecoach drivers carried parcels and messages. With the arrival of the railroads, some of these same men began to carry packages on trains, and the railroad companies gave them special fares and baggage car privileges. The American Express Company was created in 1850 from the merger of three existing businesses, and it steadily expanded in territory and number of offices. It reached Boston via its contract with the Boston & Albany Railroad, and then expanded north and east. American Express offices along the railroads, like the one in Plymouth, shipped and received parcels, and delivered them around the surrounding countryside. After two years working in the Plymouth office, Charles became a clerk in the main office in Lowell, and then in 1889, he became clerk to the superintendent of the Massachusetts division. Next he was “route agent” for the company’s operations on the Boston & Albany Railroad, and in 1896, superintendent of the Massachusetts division. In that position he supervised 275 offices on 1400 miles of railroad. Charles maintained his local attachments throughout his career. He bought “Rock Ridge Farm” next to his boyhood home, overlooking Lake Waukegan, and remodeled it into a large vacation home. The property had shorefront on the lake, where he enjoyed boating, and he built a boathouse there. One of his favorite hikes was to the top of Bald Ledge. The “farm” was his weekend retreat and also a place where he entertained his many business associates, probably arriving and departing at the convenient Winona station on the Boston and Maine Railroad. He died at Rock Ridge in December of 1949, near where he was born and where his family had lived for three generations.