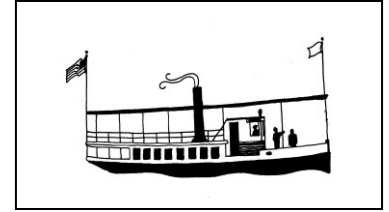


# Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.  
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Winter 2023



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

In honor of the season, our own Barbara Chalmers has been researching ice-in (as opposed to the well-tracked ice-out) dates. Holes in the data mean that her list is far from complete, but it provides an interesting picture. It turns out that ice-in is much more difficult to pinpoint than ice-out. In some years, the report was tempered by the notation that there was still a patch of open water in the middle or that although the lake had frozen over, it was still not thick enough for “teaming.” Even if taken as approximate, a quick look at the dates is revealing. Until very recent years ice-in happened in December and often in early December. In 1880—the 1880/1881 season known as “The Long Hard Winter”—ice-in was accomplished by the end of November!

### Celebrating 50 years of preserving Sunapee’s history!

We’re busy planning events for this our **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary** summer. Stay tuned for more details in the next issue of this newsletter, but here is the outline of what’s in the works. We’ve invited the school students to visit the Museum in early June, before school gets out for the summer, and will host an open house there for the local boards, both municipal and philanthropic. After a summer full of our usual activities, we’ll enjoy a celebration on August 12<sup>th</sup> at the Livery with hearty hors d’oeuvres, a band, and a silent auction. Other organizations are also celebrating anniversaries, so it will be an extra-busy summer!

We expect to run two **history cruises** this year—on June 26<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>. This time the route will run from Hastings past Soonipi, Blodgett Landing, and Great and Little Island before returning to the Harbor.

Thursday evening **programs** at the Museum will run something like this:

- 6 July: Then & Now Photos of Familiar Places
- 20 July: Significant Fires in Sunapee and the People who fought them.
- 3 August: The Restaurants of Sunapee
- 17 August: Sunapee’s Parks, Conservation Lands & Natural Resources

**Want to help?** We need you! It takes a village to run a historical society. Here are some things you could do:

- Be a docent to welcome visitors to the museum (prior knowledge of Sunapee history is not needed).
- Join our painting and carpentry crew to dress up the front of the museum this spring.
- Join our gardens crew (ably led by Pam McGraw).
- Help us clean the museum for opening in May and/or during the summer.
- ...and more. Tell us what your interests are, and we’ll put you to work. Just a few hours of your time will help a lot. Please!

In the fall we contributed a few photos and some information to a fascinating video about the oldest trees on our favorite mountain. You can see *The Forgotten Forest Primeval—Re-Discovering Mount Sunapee’s Old Growth* on YouTube.

Watch for an article in the Spring issue of *Image* magazine about your favorite historical society. Susan Nye, whose column you may have seen in the *Intertown Record*, is the author. I believe she intends to highlight the Museum but will also talk about the other services we provide to the town and beyond. We’ve provided some photos and are eager to see which ones they choose to print.

See you in the spring!

Becky Fitts Rylander

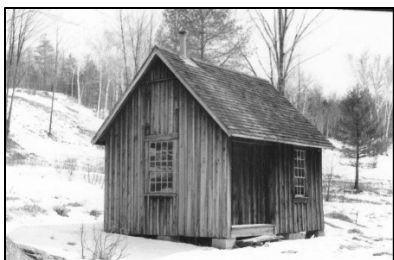


## *Did you know?.....*

In the last issue, we told you the story of Fay Osborne, the benefactor who gave us the Flanders-Osborne Stable to use as our museum in 1980. But the Sunapee Historical Society was created in 1973. So how did that happen and what transpired during the rest of the 1970s?

According to local lore, the idea of starting a historical society grew out of the town's bicentennial celebration in 1968—an idea helped along by Charlie Hill and the town's acquisition of the Fairy Queen, the engine of the steam automobile invented by Sunapee resident Enos Clough in 1869 and now on display in our museum. By 1970 a small group including Charlie Hill, Joe & Jo Hill, Al & Eileen Stocker (now Stiles), Charlie Boyce, and Gwen Barnes gathered to discuss how to get started and agreed to seek advice from neighboring historical societies.

The record goes dark for a couple of years, but by January 1973, charter members Babe Sargent, Joe Hill, Joyce Richardson, Stuart Gallup, Gwen Barnes, and Ernie Cutting had declared the beginning of the Sunapee Historical Society, formed "for the purpose of bringing together those people interested in preserving the history of the Town of Sunapee." Stuart Gallup was elected first president and served until 1977. Meetings—open to all—were held at the library and discussion revolved around fund-raising ideas and where to find a permanent home. Members began collecting artifacts from Sunapee's history, storing them in their homes for the time being. They found opportunities to show some of the artifacts at town meetings, and used them to generate interest. Early membership dues were \$2 per person.



In 1974, in memory of her late husband Albert Stocker, Eileen Stiles gave the society the butter tub shop, built and used by Frank T. Lear in the late 1870s at a field on Edgemont Road near Rolling Rock Road. It was moved to the field in Dewey Woods near Seven Hearths (now Mt. Royal Academy) with the idea of creating a historical village there. It turned out, however, that stipulations in the deed for Dewey Woods prevented that use of the property, so the plan had to be abandoned, and the search for a home continued until Fay Osborne stepped forward in 1979 with his offer of the stable his great grandfather had built and later generations had used as a garage and marina—the Flanders-Osborne Stable.



Meetings in the '70s were held at the library or school and summertime meetings (and picnics) were sometimes held at the Butter tub Building in Dewey Woods. The collection of artifacts continued, and the group was invited to store some of them in the old industrial arts room at the elementary school.

Meanwhile, our nation's bicentennial was approaching, and the historical society was asked to lead Sunapee's contribution to those events. That involved collecting signatures that were taken by Conestoga wagon to Philadelphia along with those from other towns and coordinating other events.

The prime fundraiser in those years and beyond was an antiques and crafts fair and flea market, held in the gym and on the ball field for some 33 years. That was a year-round effort ably run for many years by Louella Laro followed by Malia Abbott. The fair ultimately came to require too much effort for the funds raised.

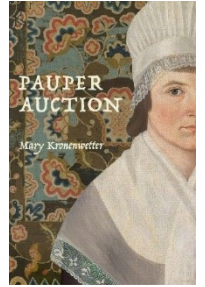
In 1978, the Sunapee, NH Historical Society, Inc. was incorporated in the State of New Hampshire and was registered in the state as a charitable entity. The IRS granted 501(c)(3) status in March of 1980.

From the beginning, Charlie Hill, Joe Hill, and Frank Morse often showed old photos of Sunapee at meetings, thereby establishing the format we often use today for our programs. Who doesn't love old photos?!

We will be forever grateful to those early pioneers who worked so hard to create the organization we have today. Clearly, they were tireless as they revved up enthusiasm, searched for a permanent home, coordinated the towns national bicentennial events, raised funds, and attended to the legalities of starting a non-profit entity.

Much effort is required to keep our historical society evolving and growing, and we hope you will consider what you can do to help!

**Pauper Auction** by Mary Kronenwetter – a Book Review. Those of you who attended our cemetery walk in October will remember that one of the characters talked about his family’s hard times and their being part of Sunapee’s “pauper auction.” This winter we’ve come across a recent book by that name—a short novel written by Mary Kronenwetter, former education director at the Fells and a Grantham neighbor. It tells the story of a young widow who, having no family to go back to when her husband died, was forced to let herself be auctioned off to the lowest bidder at town meeting. The lowest bidder was paid by the town to support the person who then often performed what amounted to slave labor. The book draws an interesting and convincing picture of life in rural New Hampshire in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



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*We’re glad to accept your membership renewal or donations at any time!*

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**MAILING ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOWN, STATE, ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**CHECK MEMBERSHIP TYPE:**

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**CONTRIBUTIONS:**

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_     I wish to remain anonymous

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Thank you!

***Sunapee Echoes***

Sunapee Historical Society

PO Box 501

Sunapee, NH 03782

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Osborne's Marine, Spring 1959