



Washington Historical Society Newsletter

SPRING 2018 EDITION

With spring around the corner, it's time for us to start thinking about our society and how each of us can contribute to making it better and more interesting. We welcome all suggestions along those lines.

Please also consider signing up to host a few hours at one of the three buildings the WHS opens during the weekends. If you haven't done it before, it's a great opportunity to learn more about the one room schoolhouse, the barn museum, and our primary museum.

Our first meeting will be Monday, April 9 at Camp Morgan lodge starting with a pot luck dinner at 6:00 and a meeting at 7:00. The board will be meeting prior to the general meeting at 5:00, and any member may attend.

Although there haven't been any general membership or board meetings during the winter months, the board members have been reviewing and revising the society's Constitution and By-Laws. When all of the individual board members' revisions and comments are consolidated and incorporated, the revised document will be presented to the members for approval.

While in SC, I contacted the acquisition editor of a publishing company that is interested in possibly publishing a book containing some of the articles about Washington that have appeared in our past newsletters. WHS would receive a percentage of the sales without incurring any of the costs of publishing.

I hope everyone has had a pleasant winter, and I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings and events.

Bert Bodnar

Washington Historical Society Officers

President:	Bert Bodnar	Barn Committee:	Phil Barker Volunteers needed
Vice President:	Noah Denslow	Museum Committee:	Gwen Gaskell Volunteers needed
Treasurer:	Elaine Crandall (495-3416)	Museum Aide:	Gail Revane
Secretary:	Marian Baker	Newsletter Committee:	Barbara Gaskell Gwen Gaskell Contributors welcome
Archivist:	Gwen Gaskell (495-3231)	Program/Publicity Committee:	Tom Talpey Pete Martin
Board of Directors:	Tom Talpey (495-3284) Pete Martin		
Webmaster:	Phil Budne		

Editors note:

The following article is all factual but the names of the hunters have been changed to protect their families.

A Close Call for Area Hunters

by John Brighton

Police Sergeant Richard F. Halloran's wife and two young boys were home sleeping in the early morning hours of November 6, 1975. The thirty-three-year-old Halloran was on patrol duty in East Boston working the graveyard shift when the seven-year police veteran noticed a suspicious vehicle parked near the intersection of Bremen Street and Neptune Road. Sergeant Halloran was seen driving his cruiser in the area sometime after 3AM by a local business owner. As this man was unlocking the gates to his restaurant he heard a gunshot, followed by a brief pause then three more shots fired in rapid succession. A witness who was driving through the intersection between 3:20 and 3:25AM noticed Halloran's cruiser with its headlights on parked behind a Mazda RX-2 that was burnt-orange in color. When this witness drove back through the intersection about eight-minutes later he noticed the Mazda was gone but the cruiser remained where he'd first seen it and Sergeant Halloran was prostrate on the ground about ten-feet away from his patrol car. Immediately the witness began driving to a local police station but turned around when he spotted another police cruiser already in-route to the scene. The responding officer found Sergeant Halloran lying face up holding his unfired service revolver in his hand. Halloran had been struck in the chest by a single shot fired from a .25 caliber handgun. The bullet had penetrated his lungs and pierced his aorta. Police Sergeant Richard F. Halloran was pronounced dead at a local hospital about ten-minutes later barely three-weeks before Thanksgiving.

The assailant sped away from the scene where skid marks left by his vehicle ended near a high granite curb where police discovered a piece of aluminum trim stuck to the curb and four pieces of plastic from an amber-colored lens cover. The physical evidence and witness descriptions of the car resulted in Boston PD locating the vehicle later that day only a few blocks distant from where Officer Halloran was murdered. As police were inspecting the car from the outside, a woman walking along the sidewalk stopped to ask if she could be of help and stated the vehicle belonged to her son Robert. After finding him at his apartment, police identified Robert LeBlanc as matching the descriptions provided by witnesses and verified that he was in sole possession of the 1974 Mazda RX-2 and had the keys to the car in his pocket. After obtaining a search warrant, police found the .25 caliber semiautomatic handgun used in perpetrating the crime hidden behind paneling in the basement of LeBlanc's home. The twenty-two-year-old defendant, the son of a Boston Police officer, was arrested and charged with First Degree Murder. He was subsequently found guilty and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In early October 1977, all nine claims under LeBlanc's appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Court were denied and he continued serving his life sentence at Norfolk County Correctional Institute. How could it be that little more than a year after the denial of his appeal this convicted murderer would be roaming the back-woods of Washington, New Hampshire?

Cottontail season generally runs from October through December in New Hampshire. Being an avid hunter in any game-season, Frank Wilson invited two of his buddies, Allan Bowman and Dan Martin to join him on a mid-December day in 1978 for some rabbit hunting in the woods along the Old Stoddard Road near the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Temperatures were hovering in the low 30's and a brisk wind whisked through the trees providing ambient cover-noise as the three men alertly scanned the forest for unsuspecting rabbits. None of the men could have imagined that they themselves would soon become prey.

Wilson and Bowman were together pushing towards the area where Dan Martin had entered the woods some distance away on the same side of the road. After a time, Martin thought he heard someone starting the engine of his Willy's Jeep and began moving to see what was happening. When he stepped from the woods onto the

Stoddard Road and approached his vehicle, Martin's anger quickly turned to fear when an unknown man in the driver's seat raised a rifle, pointed the weapon directly at Martin's face and told him to drop his gun. The stranger took the slide-action shotgun and began accusing Martin of burglarizing his camp while ignoring explanations that Martin was simply out hunting with a couple of friends. With the shotgun pointed at his back, Martin's captor prodded him down the road towards Wilson's pickup truck which was parked nearby. "I'll kill you if you try anything, keep moving or I'll blow you away!"

When Wilson and Bowman appeared walking up the road, the gunman kept the two at bay as he ordered them disarm themselves which they did. They had no idea that this stranger was Robert LeBlanc, a convicted cop-killer who'd recently escaped from a Massachusetts prison after which he'd made his way to Washington and hunkered himself down in a seasonal camp located about a half-mile down the road towards Stoddard.

LeBlanc repeatedly accused the three men of robbing his camp and ignored their pleas to walk to the house of the police chief who lived a short distance up the road, so he could corroborate their honesty. Instead, LeBlanc marched them down the road to the Seventh Day Adventist Church and ordered them to kick open the front door of the building. The door was heavily bolted, and after Wilson refused to break a window, LeBlanc used the butt of the shotgun to smash the glass. Wilson then reached inside, slid the bolt back and opened the door. LeBlanc ordered the men inside, had them empty their pockets and directed them to the front of the church and told them to sit together in a front pew. As the three sat nervously awaiting their fate, LeBlanc, presumably looking for money, went through their wallets.

After rummaging through their belongings LeBlanc told Martin to remove the hood-string from his sweatshirt and ordered him to tie-up Wilson after which he instructed him to use his sweatshirt to tie-up Bowman. Martin intentionally tied loosely and told LeBlanc he wasn't good at tying knots. "You better check these yourself," he said. LeBlanc moved toward the front of the church and told Bowman to stand and walk backwards towards him. After checking the knot, he told Bowman to move to the front of the church.

By this time the men had been held at gunpoint for about thirty-minutes and LeBlanc's actions were making them increasingly nervous. They believed he wouldn't hesitate shoot and that he could in fact be intending kill them. As Bowman moved forward Martin lunged at LeBlanc, grabbing the barrel of the shotgun with his left hand while punching him with his right. Wilson, who's knot was still loosely tied dove into the fray and as he did so the shotgun discharged. The shot barely missed hitting Bowman's head and took a chunk out of the back of the pew before hitting a window. LeBlanc chambered another round and tried to take aim at his captives who were still fighting furiously to subdue him. In the heat of the fight a second shot went straight up and entered the ceiling. The last round was chambered and again a shot rang out, this burst went to the rear of the sanctuary and put a hole through a wall and a door. The violent struggle continued until LeBlanc was finally defeated.

The men put LeBlanc in the back of Wilson's pickup, contacted the police chief and were later interviewed by two State Troopers who arrived at the town hall. LeBlanc gave his name as Stephen Dimarco and insisted he'd been hiding in the camp on the Stoddard Road from a "prominent underworld figure." He claimed to be in fear for his life because he'd testified against this man who was now serving a life sentence in prison. Still not knowing Dimarco's real identity, Judge Fairbanks of the Newport District Court set bail at \$50,000 for the charges of "Attempted Murder, Kidnapping, Felonious Use of a Firearm, Burglary and Unauthorized Use of a Propelled Vehicle." It wasn't until the following day, based on a tip from a person in Massachusetts that LeBlanc's identity became known.

LeBlanc served time in New Hampshire for the crimes he committed here, but he managed to escape two more times before completing his prison term. He's now back in a Massachusetts where he's serving the remainder of his life-sentence.

The New Hampshire Magazine
by Gwen Gaskell

We were very pleased to get an article into the NH Magazine about our town. Anders Morley is a talented writer and it was a pleasure to watch Kendal Bush at work with her camera. We do have to say it was one of our coldest winter days when she came and the barn was literally "colder than a barn" while Phil and I were there posing for the pictures!

The article started with a short story about a hike in the woods to a large boulder with cracks which gleamed in the sunlight like gold. Some of us have been asked where the rock is and have we seen it? The answer is "NO". After thinking about it and using a bit of common sense and doing some research to verify things, I came to this conclusion. If it were copper in the cracks, one would have had to have a hot coal fire on the spot to melt the copper as copper has to be at least 1083 degrees Fahrenheit to melt. Copper exposed to the air soon takes on a dark patina or tarnishes and so it would blend into the rock quickly then be covered with leaves and moss and ferns would take up residence. Gold is the only metal that does not tarnish, but again, it would require a hot fire at the site to melt the gold to pour into the cracks and surely leaves and moss would cover it. Any of us could walk by a leaf and moss covered rock and not notice if there were something hiding underneath. It was a good lead-in to a wonderful article at any rate.

We hope the article will encourage visitors to town and the museums this summer. A copy of the magazine will be at the museum on the table in case anyone who hasn't seen it would like to stop by and read it.

Work has progressed on the Town Hall and Fire Station this winter and everything is moving toward completion for which we are all thankful. The Selectmen have turned over several artifacts that are more than 100 years old and other more recent ones. They have been carefully saved and have been turned over to The Historical Society for safe keeping. This summer they will be on display in the museum along with pictures of the various stages of the Town Hall project.

The Selectmen have hopes of taking up "residence" in the Town Hall again in April, and the temporary office trailer will be leaving at that time. The public will be invited to see the changes as soon as the construction materials are used and/or removed so it will be safe for the public to walk around. Landscaping around the building will take place as the ground thaws and settles back to what we are used to but our nice green Common will certainly need some tender loving care.

Clara May Hurd, portrayed by Gwen Gaskell, has received an invitation to speak in Hillsboro at the Fuller Public Library on Wednesday, March 29 at 3 PM when students and adults will attend a program sponsored by the Hillsboro Historical Society. Clara will be sharing information from her diaries about her way of life in the times between 1872 to 1911.

Note from the Treasurer, Elaine Crandall

This is the time of the year when we are trying to collect our dues. Without your dues the Historical Society would be unable to operate. At this time we are fortunate to have a very strong society in place. Over the years we have received many donations of artifacts from friends of the society and from people all over the country who want Washington to be the depository for its history. To make this possible we have three buildings operated by the society and we sponsor programs and educational sessions to educate the community. We need your dues to be able to continue this work. Those members who are current with their dues have a red mark on their mailing label. If your label does not have a red mark please bring your dues up to date. Thank you for your support.



Another Centenarian from Washington

by Thomas E. Talpey

Browsing in the Rare Book Collection of the Shedd Free Library recently, I ran across another Centenarian with Washington roots. He was **Ernest E. Farnsworth**, born on June 24, 1872, the 21-st child born to the William Farnsworth family. William was the grandson of Simeon Farnsworth, Jr., who was one of the original settlers of Washington. William first married Sarah Mead, also called Sally, and they built a cabin along the shores of the Ashuelot River near the bridge which now stands at the north-western end of Ashuelot Pond, in the valley between Farnsworth Hill and Huntley Mountain. Between 1832 and 1852 she bore him eleven children. She died in 1855 and two years later he married Cynthia Stowell. Together they had eleven more children, making a family with 22 children Ernest was the next to last child and when he was born his father, William, was 65 years old and his oldest brother was nearly 38 years old, with a son of his own. By this time, the family had become staunchly Seventh-day Adventists, worshipping on Saturdays at the little white church which still stands in Washington along King Street on the old road to Stoddard. Indeed, William was one of the builders of that little white church, built in 1841, which later became known as the first Seventh-day Adventist church in the world.

When it came time for Ernest to leave home and go out on his own, he and two of his older brothers, Alton and Melbourne, decided to become farmers and missionaries for the Seventh-day Adventists in western Canada. There is a record of Ernest arriving in Canada in 1912 and, according to the 1916 Canadian Census, being in Eagle Creek, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. He served as a local elder and on conference committees and helped organize Seventh-day Adventist churches in western Canada. There is a story in the McKinnons' book (referenced below) of one of his older brothers visiting Alton in Canada, where "many of his neighbors spoke Russian."

In his later years Ernest was invited by a doctor friend in Chehalis, WA, to move near him where he "could grow as much garden as he could handle." It has been related to me by a member of a younger generation of the Farnsworth family that "Uncle Ernest," (as they called him) in his later years was very stooped over and could not stand up straight. He once said that "the most comfortable position he had was leaning on his hoe, tending to the garden."

Ernest's son Howard and wife Margaret Helen Taylor Farnsworth worked at Walla Walla College (now University), in College Place, WA. In his last years, Ernest would spend his winters with them in College Place and go back to Chehalis each summer to garden. He died while living with Howard and Helen on October 28, 1973, aged 101 years and 4 months. He is buried in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Walla Walla. Interestingly, distant cousin, Caroll E. Farnsworth, who was profiled in our Fall 2008 Newsletter and lived to be nearly 102, is buried in the same cemetery! (Their common ancestor was Daniel Farnsworth, who is buried in the Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery in Washington. NH.)

If any readers of this article can add some details of Ernest's life, I would be interested in learning about them. ttalpey@gsinet.net

References:

1. "William and His Twenty-two" by Mabel R. Miller. 1959, Shedd Free Library Collection.
2. "Happy Hollow, yesterday, Riverhaven today" by Virginia & John McKinnon, 1998, privately published, Shedd Free Library Collection.
3. Information obtained over the Internet by Elaine Crandall, our Treasurer.
4. Email from Erwin Farnsworth, grandson of Caroll and Amy Farnsworth

ITEM FOR SALE
FEATURING FAVORITE LANDMARKS OF WASHINGTON, NH

To order contact: Elaine Crandall (603) 495-3416 or ecrandall@verizon.net
Gwen Gaskell (603) 495-3231 or jimgwen@gsinet.net

Afghan. \$45.00 Featuring scenes of Washington woven into a beautiful memento of our town. It is available in green or blue on an off white background.

Puzzle. \$5.00 Our 494 piece, 14" x 19" puzzle is an aerial photograph of the Washington town center by Bill St. Pierre. A limited edition collectible.

Mug. \$5.00 White ceramic 11 oz. mg with a black & white sketch of the three steepled buildings in the center of town. Microwave and dishwasher safe.

Trivet. \$15.00 A 6" x 6" ceramic trivet or tile, suitable for hot or cold, with a leather backing, featuring a color photograph of the three steepled buildings in the center of town. Gift boxed.

Postcards and Notecards of Gustine Hurd Images. \$0.50 each / \$5.00 per set. Two photographs taken in the early 1880's by Gustine Hurd have been turned into postcards and notecards. The single fold notecards are packaged in sets of 4 with envelopes. Two notecards of each picture or four of one picture.

Glass Medallion. \$5.00 This 3" medallion depicts the Town Hall. The picture is adapted from an early 1880's wet plate photograph taken by Gustine Hurd. Available in blue or green.

Booklet *History of Camp Morgan.* \$25.00 A compilation of information from multiple sources brought together in one place outlining the history of Camp Morgan from it's earliest days to the present.

DVD. \$20.00 *Meetinghouse: The Heart of Washington, NH.* Few structures say "New England" as eloquently as does a classic eighteenth century meetinghouse. The small hill town of Washington, NH claims such a meetinghouse. Erected on the 4th of July, 1787, it is still the heart of the town. In this film the town opens its heart to the world. It displays 225 years of affectionate, sometimes contentious, interplay between generations of Washington citizens and the Meetinghouse on the Town Common.

All items can be shipped for an additional charge. Call or email Elaine Crandall or Gwen Gaskell at the contact info above to ascertain the amount required. It will be in the range of \$4 to \$10 per package, depending on what is being shipped and your zip code.

PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES FOR THE WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2018

Meeting monthly. May through October at Camp Morgan Lodge

6:00 – 6:45 pm Pot Luck Supper

6:45 – 7:00 pm Business Meeting

7:00 – 8:00 pm Program

April 28 or May 5 Clean Up Parties at the Museum, Barn and #5 School.

May 14 Bats Presented by Laura Deming of the NH Audubon Society Did you know that a bat can eat 1500 mosquitoes in one evening? Learn about NH bats.

June 11 *The Capital Crime of Witchcraft* Presented by Margo Burns . NH Humanities To Go Program. On first impression, the witchcraft trials of the Colonial era may seem to have been nothing but a free-for-all, fraught with hysterics. Margo Burns explores an array of prosecutions in seventeenth century New England, using facsimiles of primary source manuscripts, from first formal complaints to arrest warrants, indictments of formal charges to death warrants, and the reversals of attainder and rescinding of excommunications years after the fact; demonstrating how methodically and logically the Salem Court worked.

July 7 Pie Sale 9 am to Noon dduring the Flea Market on the Town Common

July 9 Modern Astronomy Presented by Jeff Binckes, an avid amateur astronomer who lives in East Washington. He will present an overview ranging from the ancient Greek astronomers to today's rogue stars.

July 28 Spin-In on the Beautiful Town Common 12 Noon to 4 pm. Watch spinning, and give it a try or just come by to ask questions and visit. In case of bad weather it will be held down the street at the WHS Museum or Barn.

August 13 *New Hampshire Roads Taken or Not.* Presented by Steve Taylor of the NH Humanities To Go. Following World War II, New Hampshire embarked on an extensive program of constructing new highways and improving existing roads to accommodate explosive growth in passenger vehicles and the need for better infrastructure to accommodate commercial traffic. Hundreds of millions in federal, state, and local tax dollars would be expended on this initiative over the second half of the 20th century and road construction would become an enduring part of the state's economy.

August 25 Pot Roast Dinner at Camp Morgan 5:30 to 7:00 pm continuous serving.

September 10 Experiences in the Congo during the Winter of 2017-2018. Presented by Marian Baker, WHS Secretary. She will describe her accomplishments in Africa this past winter.

October 8 To Be Announced

Museum & Barn Hours: July & August, Saturday 10 am to 2 pm, or by appointment.

District #5 School Hours: July & August, Saturday 1 -2 pm or by appointment

Call Gwen Gaskell at 495-3231 or an appointment

Washington Historical Society
PO Box 90
Washington, NH 03280

ANNUAL MEMEBERSHIP DUES are \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family (including children under 16). For those who would like to contribute more to help us cover our expenses, we have a sustaining membership for \$25. The membership year is August 1 through July 31. We appreciate your continued interest and support of our projects. New members are always welcome. If you would like to join us as a member, please complete the form below and send to THE WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 90, WASHINGTON, NH 03280. If you know of someone who might be interested in our newsletter, please let us know or pass this one on to them.

Name: _____

Participating family names: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone # Winter _____ Summer _____ Cell _____

Email: _____

Membership level: \$10 Individual _____ \$15 Family _____ \$25 Sustaining _____

PLEASE NOTE: As a non-profit historical society, we qualify with many companies for matching grants provided the company you work for, or are retired from, supports such benefits.

Email: washingtonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com