



THE TOWN OF WENTWORTH
New Hampshire

Celebrating

250

Years in the Asquamchumaukee Valley

~ 1766 - 2016 ~

WENTWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1766

Wentworth Historical Society
Wentworth 250 Committee
proudly present

“The Way We Were”
A trip through Wentworth’s history

November 1, 2016
6 pm.

Old Town Hall
Wentworth, NH



PROGRAM

Welcome & Introductions

"The Way We Were"

Colleen Tewksbury, soprano

Gary Jesseman, accompanist

"Sampling Wentworth's History"

The Charter of 1766

"Thanks for the Memories"

INTERMISSION

"I Have Come to Tell a Story"

video

Francis Muzzey, Historian

Poems by Willard Tatham, Poet Laureate

Trivia Contest Winners

Recognition and Thanks

Benediction

Rev. Jeffrey Greeson,

Wentworth Baptist Church

"Happy Anniversary to Us"

Refreshments

"THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES"

(adapted from Robin & Rainger's 1938 song)

Thanks for the memories:

- 1) of Market Day and fairs:
the Duck Race and the wares;
of swimming holes & fishing poles;
of hunting ducks and bears;
And snow fun, and such.....

- 2) Exploring country lanes,
By car or coach or trains;
We farmed and lumbered;
Worked our land;
Our village we've maintained.
O thank you so much!

Cast
in order of appearance

Hostess	Margaret Bickford
Dr. Peter Hoyt	George Morrill
Gov. Benning Wentworth	Steve Tewksbury
Major Enoch Page	
John Page, Esq.	Ray Youngs
Mrs. Page	Evie Michaud
Ben Knowland	Steve Tewksbury
Ephraim Gove	John Meade
John Witcher	John Michaud
Abel Davis	Gary Jesseman
Bessie	Ida Hutchins
Sarah	Ellie Murray
Abigail	Kay Bailey
Martha	Martha Morrill
Mary Currier	Cookie Kinder
George Plummer	Palmer Koelb
Francis Muzzey	(himself)

Crew

Refreshments	Marguerite Burne
Cake	Cathy Borger
Sound System	Rick Clogston
Props & Costumes	Margaret Bickford
Photography	Kay Bailey
Videotaping	Steve Davis
Publicity	Martha & George Morrill
Authorship	Margaret Bickford

GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

W250 Committee:

Marguerite Burne
Helen Downing
Carole Hodgdon
Ida Hutchins
Cookie Kinder
Jen and John Meade
Martha and George Morrill
Ellie Murray
Francis Muzzey
Craig Pasco
Margaret Bickford, chpn.

Community Supporters:

Wentworth Selectmen
Wentworth Police & Fire Depts.
Wentworth Elementary School
Plymouth Record (Donna Rhodes)
North Country News (Brian Flagg)

Many Neighbors and Friends

"Thank you so much!"

IDA HUTCHINS' MEMOIR

Good day, friends and neighbors! I invite you to come with me down the "memory lanes" of our last 70 years.

I lived in the same house that my father was raised in. My three brothers were also born in this house. We lived among wonderful and helpful neighbors. Even though I was away for about 36 years teaching, I came back home for vacations and weekends. I have always kept my residence in Wentworth.

Living on a small dairy farm, we all had chores to do. At different times we kept chickens, turkeys, geese, horses, pigs, and of course cattle. We all had to help with the haying and the gardening. One summer, my mother could not figure out why she couldn't pick peas, until she found the empty pods in the bull pen. Oh-oh! The boys got caught because they could pick them to eat. We belonged to the 4-H Club, and all kept animals to tend and show at the different fairs. I had Holsteins.

We did a lot of walking in those days. Cars were scarce, and gas was reserved for the farm machinery. We all went to the old school (that burned) where the new Town Office is now. My first bus driver was Frank Downing. We rode the bus driven by Lawrence Smith for quite a few years. Our graduation celebrations were held at the Town Hall. I graduated in 1951. The school had two rooms until my 8th year. Then a hall and a third room was added. The pingpong table was

Swainsboro train depot in West Rumney. It was a cold walk in the winter from Plymouth Depot to the high school. We girls were not allowed to wear slacks at this time. After the first year we rode with Pearl Clogston as she worked at Newbury's Five & Ten Cent Store in Plymouth. Later, my mom worked there so we rode with her. I also worked there weekends, vacations, and for the summer. Bob Smith, a neighbor, also worked there and eventually became assistant manager, earning 48 cents an hour, which was "big money" in those days. In the late '50's he was laid off, but finally found work at International Packing Co. (present-day Freudenberg Co.) in Bristol, earning 52 cents an hour. My father and two brothers also worked there.

Bob and my brother Maurice traveled to work for many years. They remembered hitting a deer on Rte. 25 near the Polar Caves one early morning, loosening the front grill on their 1953 Chevy. They just wired it back up and went on to work. Returning on that same road that afternoon they looked for the deer but never found it. And the body of the car was scarcely dented. Another time they caught up to a rabbit running down the road ahead of them. Pulling up beside the rabbit, they clocked it at 45 mph! Eventually the rabbit looked up, saw the car beside him, and bolted off the road. The boys laughed about that all the way home.

For winter sports, kids used a "traverse," a sled made of a wood slab on runners with a detached front section which could be steered, and brakes on the rear, like a dogsled. Once a sled ran straight through a bonfire, with no apparent injury or damage. Another time they raced straight through their neighbor's barn, in one door and out the other, lickety-split! The winters had a lot more snow on those years. Kids could climb up on the roof directly from the drifts below and get a good slide down the other side. Maurice remembers sliding into the snowdrift below with his arms straight down at his sides. Then he found he was stuck into the snow with no way to climb out, much to his chagrin and near-panic.

We recalled that one winter, Ben the blacksmith put new runners on the sled which made it go even faster. We all remembered the bellows at Ben's shop, which Bob loved to pump. The bellows would blow air on the flames, making the fire hotter. The blacksmith shop became a gathering place for the neighborhood kids. A popular sight in winter was a big Caterpillar tractor with deep V and wing plows, clearing the town roads.

Getting wood in for the winter was a family affair, and quite a chore. Dad would be up in the woods cutting; Mom would be down at the end of the slide,

and Old Fred, our horse, moved the logs at each end. As Fred went up the hill each time, the boys would hitch their sleds onto his harness for a "lift" up to the top, then slide down. Steady, strong and reliable, Fred did all these trips up and down with no driver until 4 in the afternoon. Then he'd stop hauling, right on time, and go straight to the barn.

We had our fun during the winter, having sledding parties. One place where parents and the older children got together was on the Cross Road. They hung 2 lanterns, one at the top and one at the bottom: it was safe at that time for this activity, but not now! We recall when the snow was drifted across the road between the two Brown garages. It had to be shoveled, but there was so much snow that it was like a tunnel to go through.

Hallowe'en found us in homemade costumes on our way to neighbors, hoping they wouldn't recognize us. "Trick or Treat" was not in our vocabulary in our younger years. Our neighbor Evelyn invited families to her home where she had a special activity: we would go into a dark room and touch items, then were told what parts of the body they were. Just a bit scary!

We had a small "sugar" orchard where we could spend the whole day. The horses would take us up

there. I remember helping gather the sap. For lunch I recall eating the eggs that were boiled in the sap. I still love the smell of sap boiling. The syrup made a tasty "sugar on snow" along with homemade donuts and pickles.

One day in the fall we were on our annual trip to the White Mountains with Ben and Dora Foster in their Model A Ford. We all fit in, along with our lunch.

Trains were a big part of our travel for many years, right up to the boom years of the 1950's when the highway system grew and more people could afford cars. They took country folks shopping, sightseeing, to and from school and work, and recreation of all kinds. But there was mischief afoot at the same time. Since the boys found out you could stop a train with a penny, a lot of them tried it. One night it was cold and snowy, and someone put a penny on the tracks. The train wheels spun over that smooth spot and stopped. It had to back up to get traction on the rail behind.

Dave Brown went through lots of terrible experiences in WWII, and saw a lot of men die. We had to be careful not to make a loud noise near him without telling him we were there – it would frighten him out of his wits. He had what we call "Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome" (PTSD) today. In those days since

WWI it was called "shellshock" and changed many lives, even a few of our closest neighbors. We also remember when his barn burned and how the neighbors had a barn-raising shortly afterwards.

Some of the "characters" in town included Vera McGinnis, called the "salty one," but admired and respected by our family. She looked after us kids when we went sledding. Then there was George Clough, always dressed in a long black coat, who walked everywhere and looked kind of spooky. Kids were scared of George, for no apparent reason except his appearance. Hardworking Ben Foster owned a Model T truck with a wooden steering wheel. Mr. McGinnis owned a "huge" red Buick sedan which the boys loved to sit in and pretend to drive.

Isla J. Hutchins

