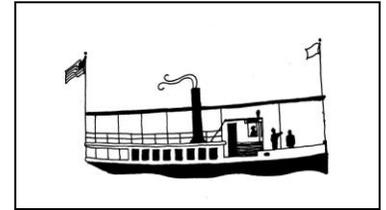


# Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.  
P. O. Box 501, Sunapee, NH 03782  
sunapeehistoricalsociety.org  
e-mail: sunapeehistory@gmail.com  
603-763-9872 or 8809  
Winter 2019



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### We did it!

At its meeting on Monday evening, January 14<sup>th</sup>, the Select Board of the Town of Sunapee signed the deed conveying ownership of the Old Abbott Library (now Sunapee Archives) to the Sunapee Historical Society. Our payment of \$250,000 covered the Abbott Library Trustees' share of the value of the property (\$240,120), our share of the real estate transfer tax, and incidental expenses to the Town.

Thanks to all of you who donated so generously, we have raised \$445,000 well within the two years stipulated in our lease-purchase agreement with the Town. We are now left with sufficient funds to accomplish some needed renovations to the building, purchase computer equipment, and set some aside for future repairs. Thank you!

The Sunapee Seniors Thrift Shop will continue in the Lower Level with the Town paying modest rent that will help with our operating expenses.

We will plan a suitable celebration to be held in the spring or summer, but in the meantime, we hope you will cheer this success, visit often (Monday afternoons, 1-4, and by appointment), and attend our events. See below for what's coming up later this month.

We have been busy planning our summer programs and events. **History cruises** are scheduled for 1 July and 12 August. This year we'll cover lakeshore development from Cressy Point south to Newbury Harbor. Barbara Chalmers is hard at work on Volume 2 of her **Historic Buildings and Places** book and will give us a preview at our Spring meeting in late April (date TBD). Four more programs will follow in July and August as usual. Watch for the full schedule in the Spring issue of this newsletter.

Want to help? See page 3 for opportunities you might enjoy.

Embrace winter, wherever you are!

*Becky Fitts Rylander*

### PLEASE JOIN US FOR A THURSDAY'S CHILD DINNER!

Thursday, January 24th, 2019

*A shared event to benefit both the New London & Sunapee Historical Societies*



A percentage of the profits of this Thursday's Child Dinner goes back to benefit these two local historical societies. An enjoyable way to support these wonderful organizations! Bring some friends! Thank you.

*Please join us for a cozy evening with friends in the historic New London Inn's Coach House Restaurant and help us celebrate SHS's purchase of the Old Abbott Library!*

Call 603-526-2791 for reservations.



SunapeeHistoricalSociety.org



NewLondonHistoricalSociety.org

### *New England Quilts and the Stories They Tell*

A NH Humanities Council talk by Pam Weeks, curator of the New England Quilt Museum, quilt-making and quilt history expert

**At the Abbott Library in Sunapee  
1 PM on Saturday, 26 January**

Co-sponsored by the Sunapee Historical Society and the Friends of Abbott Library

All are welcome. Bring a quilt to share. Refreshments following.



Sunapee Historical Society



## *Did you know...*

We have many treasures in our files and are having fun unearthing them as we reorganize things at the Archives. Here's a story that we think you'll enjoy. It comes from our collection of oral histories—a collection that we're hoping to augment soon with more stories of life in Sunapee. We'll call this one "Howard Pratt Calls Home." It's a story told by Howard, himself, and recorded by Joe Hill for the Historical Society in 1988.

These days, we take instant communication—often thanks to a phone in our pocket—for granted. It wasn't always so easy!

**Setting the scene.** Howard Pratt served in the Sea Bees in the Pacific during World War II and was away from home for 2 ½ years. When he landed in San Francisco in December 1945, the first thing he wanted to do was phone his wife. It was the middle of the night by time Howard, with his pocket full of quarters for the pay phone, got his turn. Lib (Elizabeth) was living with her parents in Sunapee, but they had no phone. Talking with her would require phoning the neighbor and asking that they go next door, rouse Lib, and get her to go to their house and the phone. And a coast-to-coast call had to be relayed from one operator to another across the country.

**The First Problem.** Howard asked the San Francisco operator to call Arthur Van Dreden, the neighbor, but the operator could find no one by that name. It turned out that Artie was actually Adolph. And no, Howard had no street address to help in the search. But he prevailed on the operator to follow his directions and complete the call.

**What Happened (in Howard's words).** "You get me to the Sunapee, NH operator however you have to do it. And when you get to Sunapee, don't get discouraged. Let it ring, ring, ring as it will be quite a long time before you will get an answer." "Why is that?" she asked. I told her that nobody telephones anyone else at three o'clock in the morning in Sunapee, so consequently the operator leaves the switchboard and goes to bed. She has a bell that will wake her up for an emergency, as the switchboard is in the next room. But, remember, this is December and it is cold, so she will have to get out of bed, put on her slippers, her bathrobe, and do the other little things that are necessary before she can get to the board to accept the call. So when you get through to Sunapee, let it ring and ring.

I soon heard the operators in Reno, Salt Lake City, Denver; Omaha, Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Syracuse, Springfield (MA), Keene, and finally Newport. "Call Sunapee, and keep ringing." After 1 to 2 minutes or more, on the line comes "Sunapee, Sunapee, Mrs. Calkins speaking." I spoke up, "Mrs. Calkins, Hi!" She says "Howard, is that you? Are you really there?" "That's right, this is me. I just got in this afternoon and it has been a long wait for a telephone."

She said, "Tell me, are you all right? You did not get hurt or anything?" "No, Mrs. Calkins, I am all right. I was very lucky. I was scared a lot of times, but no hurts of any kind" I responded. "My goodness, I am so glad to hear that" she says. "Oh, you won't know your little son, Dougie. He has grown up to be such a big boy. And Elizabeth is just fine, she is holding up real well. She will be ever so glad when you get home. My, but it has been a long time, hasn't it?" "I wonder if you would..." I tried to say. "If you have been on those Pacific islands all this time, you haven't seen any snow for a long time. You should see what we have here. It is way up past the window sills. My goodness, we have had such big storms, one right after another," she kept right on.

After quite a long time, I finally got a word in to say "Mrs. Calkins, would you ring Artie's house, so they can get Elizabeth on the phone?" She said, "Howard, the minute I heard your voice I plugged it in and it has been ringing. I shut the buzzer down so you can't hear it but it is ringing. Of course, the snow is deep so Artie has to put on his high boots after going down stairs to answer the phone. You know, the phone is near the kitchen door. And he has to get all together to go out and over to the Gilchrist house. All this takes time, you know. And, as I said, the minute I heard your voice, I plugged in and started ringing, so don't you fuss about it. Any minute now, Elizabeth is going to be on the phone. It will take quite a long time to go across to the house, then bang on the door to wake up the Gilchrists, and Elizabeth will have to get dressed up warm to go over to their house. So, Howard, you tell me all about how things are with you."

Eventually, Lib came on the phone and they had a good chat. The San Francisco operator learned that anything can be done as long as you know how—thanks this time, as Howard said, to the combination of 1945 technology and the benefits of living in a small town!

*Howard and Lib lived in Sunapee from 1956 until their deaths in 2002 and 1997. They were married for 56 years. Howard worked for the NH Department of Revenue Administration, and Lib was a much-loved first grade teacher at Sunapee Elementary School. Together, they ran Sunapee's Wayside Grocery Store in the Lower Village.*

## Would you like to help?

Sunapee's history is especially interesting. If you'd like to learn more and help us with its preservation and with reaching out to our community, please consider the following opportunities—listed in no particular order—and let us know what appeals to you.

Docent at the museum: Welcome visitors from around the world. Training provided; three-hour stints.	
Docent coordinator	Programming
Transcribing diaries and other documents	Fund raising
Organizing/providing refreshments for programs	Acquisitions: policy and cataloging
Gardening and/or lawn care	Scanning
Research	Organizing digital files
Publicity	Writing articles
Building maintenance	Recording oral histories
Snow removal	Planning and mounting displays
Housekeeping	

There's lots to do and lots of ways your talents can be used. But we don't know what you'd like to do. No need to wait to be asked!



The Old Abbott Library soon after it was constructed in 1926

**WANTED:**  
Film Editor/Previewer  
for 16 mm, and/or  
8 mm & Super 8 mm.

(similar to this image...)



We have acquired various old movies that need to be reviewed so we may determine if they are worth transferring to digital media. Do you have one?

Donation or loaner of any of the above would be a big help!  
Thanks!

Contact: Ron Garceau  
Ph: 603-763-2441  
email: rongarceau@comcast.net

## 2019 MEMBERSHIP – RENEWALS – CONTRIBUTIONS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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### CHECK MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

\$15 Individual     \$25 Family     \$50 Business     \$100 Patron     \$300 Sustainer

### CONTRIBUTIONS:

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

### NEWSLETTER

Send future newsletters by e-mail  
 Send future newsletters by postal mail

### Please make checks payable to:

Sunapee Historical Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 501, Sunapee, NH 03782    Thanks!

***Sunapee Echoes***

Sunapee Historical Society  
PO Box 501  
Sunapee, NH 03782

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Thank you, thank you, thank you to all our supporters!