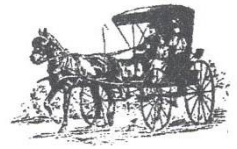


Sunapee Echoes

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Winter 2015



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

We are saddened at the loss of the Jake's Market—better known to many of us as Gardner's Store—in Georges Mills to fire during the early hours of 4 January. Please see page 2 for more information about that landmark.

The Abbott Library. I hope by now, you have all had a chance to visit the gorgeous new Abbott Library. Even on the coldest days it is snug and warm but also bright and airy. We continue to promote our idea for the best use of the original library building. Here's what I wrote about that as part of our page in the Town Report:

We continue to refine our vision for creating an historical library and archive in the original library building. We presented our plan at the summer "visioning" sessions and have written a business plan outlining what we want to do and how we expect to raise the necessary funds. Meanwhile, we have sufficient reserves to get started there. We are eager to preserve the building along with items in our collection that are not suited to life at the controlled-by-the-climate museum and to provide year-round accessibility for the public to Sunapee's oldest records and artifacts.

We can think of no better way to preserve that fine, old building while simultaneously putting it to good use.

Planning for Summer. We have begun planning programs for our Thursday evening "cracker barrel" talks in July and August. The PALS (Partners Around Lake Sunapee) organization has chosen "recreation" as its theme, so lots of possibilities spring to mind. Perhaps we'll do one on learning to ski in Sunapee—both on the Mountain and at Ski Tow Hill. Does anyone have photos? Even more likely is one on the Lake Sunapee Regatta—a multi-day competition in water sports that was held every August for many years beginning in the 1890s. Photos of the crowds that assembled to watch are astounding.

Lucy Young got my attention when she handed me a small trophy for second place in men's diving in the 1937 Regatta. So I found the results from that year's competition in the *Argus* (the Richards Library in Newport has old issues on microfilm). I knew that my dad had participated for several years and was sometimes on the organizing committee, but I learned things I hadn't known. Who knew that my parents took a prize in mixed doubles canoe racing?! Lots of other familiar names popped up in those press reports. If any of you have memories of the Regattas (or photos or other memorabilia), please let us know.

Enjoy the snow and stay warm!

Becky Fitts Rylander



Photo by Gloria McDonough, 2014

*Before
and
during
the fire.*



Photo by Daniel Wolf

The Story of Gardner's Store

"I'm just going to run down to Chub's for a paper." How many times did you hear that or something similar? For many of us Chub's was the go-to place for newspapers, Vermont "rat" cheese, lunch fixings, candy, and all sorts of other groceries and sundries. Jake's happily carried on that tradition in recent years. But now it's gone, though I hear there's talk of rebuilding. Georges Mills is the poorer for the loss of that old structure, and we thought you might like to know a little more about it.

According to our research, ownership of that property began with Daniel George (1808-1864), son of the Daniel George who was a settler and arrived in town about 1800 with four brothers. The property comprised 50 acres between Otter Pond and Lake Sunapee. It passed to the second Daniel's son, Daniel Ackley George (1834-1891), who Governor Bartlett in his *The Story of Sunapee* (p. 133) says was commonly known as "Ack" George and remembered as "Gristmill" George. After Ack's death, a one-acre parcel was sold in 1914 to "Uncle" Charles Russell who used it to house the horses and carriages he used carrying the mail from Georges Mills to Sunapee. We believe it also served as a stop for the Concord Coach.



Auction, 1928—from the Chase Collection

In 1928, Charles Hutton (Chub Gardner's grandfather) purchased the property and by 1947 it passed to his daughter, Murilla Colby. Chub's brother and step-father added gas pumps and operated it as a gas station and auto repair shop until Murilla sold the barn to Chub and Marjorie Gardner in 1953. At that point, Chub and Marjorie turned it into Gardner's Store and created the landmark so many of us remember so fondly. They operated it continuously until retirement in 1985. When it was sold in 1986, it became Georges Mills General Store.

Some have suggested that the barn once served as an ice house, but Muriel Bergeron tells me that ice was actually kept in a small building behind the barn. Chub (her father) turned that building into a small cottage. Overhead photos taken by Babe Sargent and his father in 1949 and 1950 reveal that the wing that is evident in old photos of the barn was removed in the year between the taking of those two photos (1949 photo below).

I can still picture Chub cutting a chunk of Vermont cheddar "rat" cheese from the huge wheel that sat on top of the counter. Muriel Bergeron remembers the fun she had working in the store during her high school years and the pride she felt when she learned how to cut a perfect pound of cheese from that wheel of cheddar.

If you remember Gardner's Store, do you remember the little street that cut off the corner and ran behind the store and over to Springfield Road? At the corner with Route 11, on the shore of Otter Pond, Murilla Colby (Chub's mom) ran Colby's Grill in a small cottage with a porch hanging out over the pond. She was famous for her good cooking, and I seem to remember that my mom was especially fond of her pies.

Do you have memories or photos of the store that you would like to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Becky



Sources:

Sullivan County Land Records

The Story of Sunapee, John Henry Bartlett, 1941

Sunapee, New Hampshire Bicentennial 1768-1968 (booklet), 1968

Conversation with Muriel Gardner Bergeron

Wild Goose Waters from Above, John W. "Babe" Sargent and Ron Garceau, 2009

Did you know this?

In honor of town meeting season, we like to take a look back to see what was happening in town a century ago. Here are a few items gleaned from the Town Report covering the year that ended on February 15, 1915:

- The question of whether to rename Georges Mills "Van Harbor" was asked again at town meeting and again was passed over.
- Following the Hame Shop fire the previous year, the town was deliberating what to do with the property, considering retention of some of it and tax breaks for new businesses using the space.
- The Fire Department reported the gift from Billy B. Van of a 160-gallon chemical engine. Then they needed a new fire house to keep it in.
- The library had loaned 5150 books.
- The School Department had established a 4-year high school and a PTO had formed that they hoped would facilitate more parent involvement in the school.
- The High School curriculum, with academic and commercial courses, was as follows:

Year I: Algebra

English

Ancient History

Latin (academic)

Book-keeping (commercial)

Year II: Geometry

English

French

Latin (acad)

Adv. Book-keeping (com)

Year III: English

French

Chemistry

Latin (acad)

Commercial Law (com)

Year IV: English

French

Physics

American History

Advanced Algebra (acad)



A word about membership renewals: Renewals are not due at any specific time of year, so we include the form below in every issue of this newsletter. We simply hope that you will remember to renew or send a contribution at a time of your choosing during the year. If you forget that you've already done it, or if you are a life member who sends in a renewal, we will be glad to consider it a donation. We deeply appreciate your support.

Sunapee Historical Society 2015 Membership, Renewals, and Contributions

☐ \$15 Individual ☐ \$25 Family ☐ \$200 Life Individual ☐ \$350 Life Family
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☐ Please send future newsletters by email.

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From our files:



*Russell's Barn c. 1928, later Gardner's Store and Georges Mills Market
--from the Dan and Melissa Chase Collection*