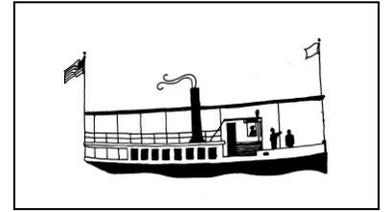


# Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.  
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Winter 2021



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

As the new year begins, we find ourselves wondering what summer will bring. Will we be able to operate as usual with the museum fully open, programs on Thursday nights, and history cruises? Or not? We've begun planning but will keep our options open with work-arounds handy in case they are needed.

**Summer 2021 schedule.** At the moment, History Cruises are scheduled for July 5<sup>th</sup> and August 9<sup>th</sup>, both Monday evenings. We'll explore the west shore from Burkehaven to Job's Creek. Programs are tentatively set for July 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> with fall and spring programs in late April and early October (dates TBD). Watch for the full schedule in our April newsletter.

**Old clock.** We are excited at the prospect of acquiring a grandfather clock that was made in Sunapee in about 1805! Please see the next page for more about the clock and the master craftsman who created it, Whittier Perkins. While we very rarely purchase artifacts for the collection, this seems an appropriate exception. **Anyone who wants to help us defray the \$9,000 price tag should feel free to send a check or contribute via the "Donate" button on our webpage, marking either with "clock fund."** Thank you!



**Register of Historic Places.** Thanks go to Rosemary Gates for shepherding our application to the state for inclusion of Sunapee Archives on the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places to its successful conclusion. Although this recognition in no way restricts what can be done to the building, it is now marked as part of Sunapee's rich history. (But never fear: the building is preserved by

restrictions in our deed and by our intention to keep its traditional appearance.) This handsome plaque will soon hang in the building.



**New HVAC System Complete.** With a new HVAC system completed at the Archives, we are pleased to thank Burpee Hill Construction for overseeing the project and the Sunapee Seniors Thrift Shop for their patience. Of course, the project took longer than expected, but we were lucky that it coincided with a time of reduced public activity. Also accomplished was a custom-made display case for antique clothing and a new granite doorstep. We hope that the virus will soon subside so we can resume open hours on Monday afternoons.

**Latest Acquisitions.** Although Sunapee Archives has been closed, donated articles have continued to arrive including several ledgers and diaries, an amethyst necklace that once belonged to renowned summer resident Martha Furman, and a christening gown made by Clara Osborne for her son Raymond (Pete) Osborne in 1911.



We hope the rest of your winter is pleasant and that we're all vaccinated soon!

Becky Fitts Rylander

## Did you know?.....



We have discovered that a very special clock is available at Delaney Antique Clocks in West Townsend, MA. The grandfather clock was crafted in about 1805 by Whittier Perkins here in Wendell (as Sunapee was then named). Thanks go to our correspondent Damon Di Mauro for the tip!

From the Revolutionary War into the 1820s, Britain refused to sell brass, considered a precious metal, to our new country, so clockworks were fashioned of wood. This is one of those individually crafted clocks. The works and face are made of wood. The face is decorated with flowers at the corners and a colonial home above the dial. It is signed "W. Perkins, Wendell." The hands are pewter and the dial has hours in Roman numerals with 5-minute intervals marked in Arabic numerals. The wooden geared movement was constructed in a manner consistent with the Ashby (MA) School of clockmaking, leading the experts at Delaney's to conclude that Whittier Perkins must have trained there. They also know that he was first cousin of Robinson Perkins who had trained there and was working as a clockmaker in Jaffrey, NH. It is a 30-hour clock and strikes the hour on a cast iron bell. Few other Whittier Perkins clocks are known to

exist.

Delaney's reports that the case of this 7-foot 3-inch tall clock is made of New England white pine and still has its original brown wash finish highlighted by streaks of black paint. From the construction of the case, they deduce that it was made by a local cabinetmaker—perhaps a coffin maker—who was not schooled in the usual methods for a tall case clock. Its lines are simple but elegant.

Thanks to Barbara's research, we know a bit about Whittier Perkins. He was born in Methuen, MA in 1764 and came to Sunapee in 1788 with his father, step-mother, and siblings, Nathaniel and Sarah. In 1793 he married Jenny Messer (1772-1854) of Sutton. Whittier (sometimes called "Whicher") bought property and built a farm on North Road—the property that became Milestone Farm belonging to the Sargent/Richardson clan (see photo on page 4). In an 1877 historical sketch of the area, Erastus Wadleigh reported that "Whittier Perkins was a remarkable mechanical genius and penman. He was selectman in 1800." Whittier sold the farm to his brother-in-law Isaac Messer in 1810 but lived there until his death in 1813 at the age of 49. His grave is in Sunapee's Colby Cemetery on Stagecoach Road. Jenny remarried five years later to widower Abram Fisher (1763-1851), a wealthy cabinetmaker from Claremont.

When this clock comes home to Sunapee, it will be on display at Sunapee Archives for all to enjoy. Thanks to all who are donating to make its return possible!



***A word about Post Offices, apostrophes, and town names.*** You may recall that we mentioned in our last issue that the town's name was changed from Wendell to Sunapee in 1853. We should have clarified that: Actually, the town decided to change its name in 1850 and petitioned the state legislature. That bill passed in 1851, but it took the US Post Office Department until 1853 to change the name of the post office. George's Mills was named in 1849 in honor of Daniel George, including an apostrophe. After all, Mr. George had multiple mills there! But the Post Office dropped the apostrophe in 1893, perhaps to simplify addresses. Similarly, Blodgett's Landing seems to have lost its apostrophe, too. We've heard that Mr. Blodgett didn't like the apostrophe and refused to use it, but Henry Hancox included it on his maps (1897, 1911, and 1915).

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**SUNAPEE**  
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And when ordering from Amazon, please use the **smile.amazon.com** website and list the Sunapee, NH Historical Society as your chosen charity. Thanks!



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

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

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**CHECK MEMBERSHIP TYPE:**

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

**CONTRIBUTIONS:**

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Sunapee, NH 03782

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Thank you!

***Sunapee Echoes***

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*Whittier Perkins's Farm, North Road, circa 1880*

*Sunapee Historical Society Collection.*