



STETSON PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWSLETTER



August - September 2010

Stetson's Community Newsletter since 1988

Selectman's Corner

Submitted by: Don Carroll

As I sit here writing this piece, sweltering in 80+ degree weather, complaining about the heat, I like most everyone seem to forget about June and July of 2009, when there were a total of seven days over 70 degrees until July 25th. On top of that, about half of those days it rained in some form. So like me, stop and think about last year and suffer in silence, or at least try.

I hope all of you have visited the Veteran's War Memorial since the benches were added and the flower bed has been refurbished. Many thanks to Cole's Transportation Museum for donating the benches, Diane Lacadie for transporting them, Bob Creighton of Newport Memorial for installing them and Marlene Webber for redoing the flower bed. Also I understand that I have been remiss for not mentioning Foss Farms Greenhouses who have furnished plants and containers for not only the memorial, but also the Welcome to Stetson signs, so I offer an apology for not being aware and on behalf of the town, our heart felt thanks to Sue and Warren Foss.

We are starting a new era of our Park and Rec endeavors as of July one. We have new co-directors. Dannel Ham and Christy Hewitt, who want to bring back all the good old days, (which they tell me they're too young to remember), including Valentine, Easter, Halloween and Christmas parties, baseball, softball, soccer etc. They are also interested in starting some activities, or programs geared toward our senior residents, which Kay Underhill has agreed to be a special advisor to help these young people with some ideas. As with all programs these ladies will need help and cooperation from you folks. To address this need, there will be a meeting at the Meeting House at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 10th, to gather information, get input and ideas, and hopefully volunteers. Everyone is welcome, parents, children, seniors, etc. Also I have been asked to mention that soccer sign up forms will be available in mid August at the store and the Town office. Lets' get behind these girls and make the Parks and Rec program a big success.

It has been decided to forgo Stetson Days for this year due to the late start of the planning process; we didn't feel we could do justice to putting together a kind of day the public deserves. However, the good news is Marlene Webber has stepped forward and offered to put together a committee for a super celebration next year. Marlene would like to start planning immediately while some entertainers, etc. are available. Anyone interested in helping out or with ideas is invited to call Marlene at 296-2663. Let's make Stetson Day 2011 a day to remember.

As a few of you may remember, we had the Annual Town Meeting a few weeks ago. In my twenty years as a selectperson, June 12, 2010 was the worst case of public apathy and indifference I have witnessed. Of the 1100 registered voters in this town, 29, yes that's 29 of those voters attended town meeting and were charged with spending 1.3 million dollars of your money. A few years ago when we were in turmoil, everybody attended meetings, had an opinion, a solution or complaint, etc. Now things have gone smoothly for a couple of years and nobody seems to care, as shown by the attendance at Town Meeting and Selectpersons meetings, it seems to me a shame in a town of good and caring people, which is proven time after time when anyone is in need of help, the people step up with what ever is needed, that we have to beg people to attend a once a year meeting, or serve on a board that meets once a month, or attend a meeting twice a month to keep up with what is going on with town government and perhaps offer an opinion or comment.

Now that I have that off my chest, I will close by wishing all a safe and happy Summer.

Stetson Historical Society

Submitted by: Brenda Clark

Greetings, once again, from the Stetson Historical Society. Attending the meeting were Delores and Beulah Butler, Connie Merrill, Brenda Clark, Julie Brownie and Charles and Janet Leighton.

Our porch sale and bake sale on June 5th was successful considering the weather with profits of over \$200.00. Among items donated for sale were three small Adirondack style chairs made by Glenn Burleigh. The desserts that weren't sold were donated to a fundraiser dinner held for the late Gary Bellefleur, Jr.

Wilber Harvey, a stone worker from Guilford, has offered to make a granite yoke in honor of Granger and Khatadin for the society. It will be a beautiful asset for S.H.S.

We have started the work for our new building to house all the tools and larger items which have been or will be donated to the society. We were able to get a good deal on plywood so that has been purchased. We have the permit and the groundwork has been done. Hopefully the weather will cooperate when the inmates are here.

It won't be long before it is time to take orders for next year's calendars. We ask you, the people in Stetson, who have any older pictures that you might like to share to please drop them off to Charles Leighton or Connie Merrill. They will be copied and returned to you. We will need them by the middle of August.

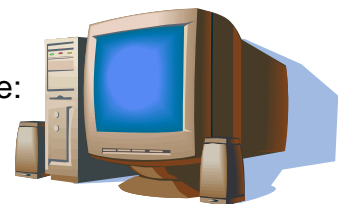
Charles is going to look into having all the articles he has written for the newsletter to be compiled into a book to sell for the historical society as a fundraiser. We had to do some talking to even get him to consider it, but to make money for the society he will do about anything.

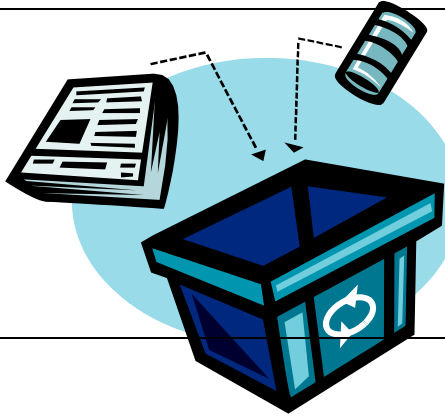
Among the new donations are a very well kept de-horner for cows and an old miter saw formerly owned by Frank Mason donated by Dick Mills, a set of chairs, a wooden headboard, an old mirror from an old dresser, a box of tools etc. from Sally Eells.

We have started working on putting the decals on the shutters. Charles and Bub took them off the building and Brenda, Janet and Bub put the decals on and then they were put back up. I must say, when they were put up again, they looked pretty darn good. We have had a lot of compliments about how nice they look. We hope to get the rest of them done soon.

The next meeting is August 5 at 6:30 p.m. Hope to see you there.

The Stetson Public Library Newsletter
Stetson's Community Newsletter since 1988
can now be accessed by visiting the town webpage:
www.stetsonmaine.net





Roadside Recycle Dates 2nd Tuesday of the Month

August 10

September 14

Stetson Public Library

Submitted by: Amy Butler, Librarian

The Stetson Library is still hosting the summer reading program, if your children haven't come in yet, there's still time! We will no longer be accepting books for the book sale. We have run out of room to store them.

New Books

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins
(Winner of the Maine Student Book Award 2009-2010)

Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins

We also have a new romance section, for any interested, come in and check it out.

Stetson Town News

Fall "white goods" clean up
October 16th from 9 am - 2 pm

Stetson Historical Society
August 5 at 6:30 p.m

Park & Recreation Meeting
August 10th at 6:00 p.m.
at the Meeting House



History of Stetson, Maine

Submitted by: Charles Leighton

The following is the twenty fifth in a series about the early history of the town of Stetson. Most of the information contained was gleaned from early town and county records, plus highlights from "History of Stetson, Maine (1800-1931)" by Lilla Woods Daniels.

Early History of Stetson No. 26 Part 1

I have been asked by several people to do a column about "Hartwell's Landing". Although it has been just 100 years since it was in it's heyday (early 1900's), and only 70 years since they closed (about 1940), information and photos are not easy to find. Anyone who was familiar with the operation in the 1920's and early 1930's has passed away or is nearing 90 years of age. Their memories (like a lot o us) are often sketchy, which can be expected. I will do the best I can with the material I have too work with.

George Sumner Hartwell was the son of Sumner Hartwell (1821 – 1899) and the grandson of Oliver Hartwell Jr. Oliver (1761 – 1854) was one of the town's earlier settlers, coming to Stetson about 1820. His name is first mentioned in the public records when chosen as a fence viewer in 1823.

The original Hartwell homestead was on the south side of the East Newport Road. The family had lived there for over 100 years when George's son, Lloyd Arthur Hartwell moved out in 1930. Then sold to John Trickey, the buildings were destroyed by fire in the late 1930's

Old tax assessor's records are about all we have for information about what properties a resident or non-resident owned. Even then, they were sometimes vague; often referring to an inventory list that has long since ceased to exist. We do know that George's father was taxed on several parcels of land, including the western shore of Pleasant Lake.

I believe the first camps were built and rented in the mid 1890's, although records do not confirm it. Sumner died in 1899, but in the following year, George was taxed for "cottages and lots on the lake". The "landing" idea must have already been in progress, since I doubt the camps could have been constructed in such a short period of time. By 1903 he had acquired a "steamer" that had a tax assessment value of \$150.00. The tax records must have been referring to the steamboat, "Ruth Elliott".

His father's estate was taxed to the "Heirs of" until 1917. George had shared the estate with sisters Dora and Emma and brother Frank until that time. He had acquired several parcels of land over the previous years, and when he finally bought out all the other heirs in 1916, he had over twenty pieces of property totaling nearly 900 acres.

From several rental cottages on the western end of the lake, where Stetson Shores Campground is now located, George quickly expanded his enterprise. In a short time, the "Landing" as it was called, was what we might say was a family oriented operation for vacationers and also a "day trip fun land".

"Hartwell's Landing" was a very well known destination point that had numerous activities to keep visitors occupied. Besides swimming and camping, they had rowboats and canoes for rent, plus horseshoe and croquet games. It even had a one lane, outdoor bowling alley. There was also the steamboat named "Ruth Elliott" for scenic rides and fishing trips on Pleasant Lake. It was over 40 feet in length, with a wood fired boiler and could carry about 30 passengers. In the early 1920's, after about 20 years of excursions the proud "old lady" was retired, stripped of any metal components, and left to rot in a swampy area near the landing. Outboard motors, with small gasoline engines that most anyone could put on a boat made steamboats obsolete. A picture of "Ruth Elliott" is in the Historical Society premier 2003 calendar for the month of August.

Henry Hartwell, grandson of George S., told me that he had a piece of the steamboats gunwale (upper edge of a boat's side) and it was stored in his barn. I never saw it, so can't confirm his claim. Sadly, it was lost when the barn burned.

Another entertainment attraction was a homemade "Ferris wheel" pictured in July of the 2003 historical society calendar. It was hand cranked, using a flywheel and series of pulleys and flat belts. It may have been crude looking, but the kids (and probably some adults) would have really enjoyed the experience; times were simpler then. We believe the photo was taken about 1897, due to there being only 36 stars on the flags. How long it was in use and what became of it is not known.

The biggest adult attractions were dances held on Friday and Saturday nights at the "Pavilion". Old timers tell me the dance hall had a beautiful hardwood floor and a loft for the band. Folks really had a good time with waltzes, foxtrots and of course the old time country or square dances.

Good bands from all over the area were featured. On occasion, a "big band" such as Rudy Vallee or Bennie Goodman would play one or two nightstands. Advertising posters were put in all the surrounding towns. The crowds would be huge, with standing room only inside and little room to dance. A number of folks brought chairs and sat outside just to enjoy the music.

There were 6 or 7 cottages for rent, by the week or season. Tenting sites were available for people who liked to rough it; a small refreshment stand with swing-up service windows was situated in the center area, near the lake. Cold soda, hot dogs, candy bars, etc, were always ready for the thirsty and hungry patrons. Before the late 1920's ice cream was handmade on site and eaten soon after. There was no way to keep it from melting.

After 1925, "dry ice" became readily available for keeping anything frozen. It consisted of compressed and solidified blocks of carbon dioxide gas. The blocks, which came in many sizes, did not start to melt (turn back into a gaseous form) until their temperature warmed to 104 below zero; cold enough to keep most anything frozen. It also has a curious property; when it "melts"(evaporates) it does not go back through a liquid state, thus no mess to clean up. When we were kids it was fascinating to drop small pieces of it in some water and watch it "boil" away. It did not take much to entertain us back then. It was not dangerous to handle, but holding some in an unprotected hand for more than a few seconds could result in frostbite. Most people have never even heard of "dry ice", but up until the late 1940's stores used it for most of their cooling needs. It is still widely used today in transportation of frozen goods all over the globe. The United States alone consumes about a billion pounds (50,000 tons) a year. There are still numerous places around the country that anyone can purchase it for about \$1.00 per pound.

Nowadays, we take refrigeration and ice machines for granted. Since electric power did not reach all of Stetson until the mid 1940s, keeping fresh food from spoiling and farmers milk cold, depended on ice; ice boxes in the home and blocks in the water of milk tanks; "Hartwell Landing" was no exception. With so many people in one spot for the summer months, it took literally tons of ice to satisfy their needs. Not far from the dance hall was a large icehouse. During the winter months, lake ice was harvested and stored, insulated by layers of wood sawdust. Properly packed ice could last a couple of years, but was usually replaced every winter.

A well-stocked general store had most anything a camper would need. The March 2006 calendar has a picture of loads of lumber being hauled to the railroad in Etna. The entrance sign in the background lists some store items they carried; hardware, flour, boots, shoes and various sundries were among the many things listed.

On the left hand side of the entrance road they had a baseball field. Every town had at least one team, and some of the players were semi-pro material. More about them in a future column. The high school boys team normally practiced on a field (cow pasture) just south of the stream, near the "upper dam". It was rough, rocky and did not have a backstop behind the catcher. When home games with other schools were scheduled, they usually played at the "Landing field". It was relatively smooth and even had a nice backstop. Tommy Tufts, who was on the high school team until it closed in 1940, remembers it really being a treat not having to chase errant balls out in the woods.

More next time.