

CAMBRIDGE HARKENER

CELEBRATING THE HERITAGE OF CAMBRIDGE, VERMONT

Vol. XIV, No. 3

July 2019

Current Officers & Directors

President: Joel Page

Directors:: Lynn Austin, Diancy Boyden,

Vice President: Rick Fletcher

Richard Gagne, Barb Juell,

Secretary: Richard Gagne

Georgeana Little, Peter Opstrup

Treasurer: Georgeana Little

Honorary Board Members: June Dodge, Matt Safford

Cambridge Village Historic Preservation Commission to Hold a History Walk

For several years the Cambridge Historical Society has thought of doing a History Walk to highlight the important people and places in our town. This year we're hoping to do just such a Walk in Cambridge Village to publicize the Cambridge Village Historic Preservation Commission's attempt to have the Village included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The idea is to have people representing historic personages from the Village, in period dress, stationed around the Village to explain to visitors the importance of the person, the location, or both, to the history of the Village, and by extension, the Town. For example, someone may represent Rev. Edwin Wheelock, pastor of the 1st Congregational Church, standing in the church talking about that historic structure and the important part Rev. Wheelock played in the town during his 50 years as pastor. Other personages who might be included in the walk would be H.N. Gray, Wilford Smith, C.D. Gates, Myrtie Wallace - it's amazing how many people there are. This is not meant to be a fundraiser, there will be no price of admission.

The plan is to hold the event in October. There is a lot to do before then. We need to find people willing to participate, gather the historic information, find appropriate costumes, advertise - we need people with expertise in all these areas. It is possible that some of the historic house would be open, but that would be the decision of the homeowner.

The first step in the process will be an open meeting to be held at the Cambridge Community Fellowship church on Thursday July 11th at 6:30 pm. We invite and encourage anyone interested in participating in this event, anyone who might have ideas we could use, anyone with special talents we can exploit, to mark their calendars and come on down.



Remember the Date: Thursday July 11th.

Early History of Cambridge

by Ida Morgan Anderson

Beginning in 1935, Ida Morgan Anderson began serializing a column on the History of Cambridge in the *Cambridge Town Crier*. Many of our readers may remember the series of 27 Installments. With this issue of the Harkener we begin publishing those installments for a new audience on the assumption that the copyright (if it ever existed) has long since expired. We hope you will enjoy this "blast from the past."

Installment One

Sometimes it is both pleasant and profitable to look back over the past and see the changes that time has made. Improvements do not always improve, and we may have "progressed backwardly." Pioneer days, when to say a person was "hardworking" was equal to bestowing the Victoria Cross upon them, made strong characters firm, resourceful and ambitious. They learned fortitude and perseverance in the school of "hard knocks," while ease and leisure develop a race without mental and moral backbone.

The facts upon which these articles are founded were gathered from experiences and recollections related by old people, from a booklet written by the Rev. E. Wheelock, *Childs' Gazette*, and many newspaper clippings.

The first settlement in Lamoille county was made in Cambridge in May, 1783 by John Spafford of Pierpoint, N.H., a soldier who had lost a leg in the Revolutionary war. He cleared two acres, planted it with corn, and then built a log house, roofing it with bark. A fall freshet destroyed a part of his crop, but he harvested and carefully stored the remainder and went back to New Hampshire after his wife and two children. In this cabin, without windows, and with a quilt hung up for a door, they passed the winter. Their nearest neighbour was in Jericho, twenty miles away, and the nearest road was the Hazen road in Craftsbury.

On one occasion when their supply of meal was getting low, Mr. Spafford took a grist on a handsled and went down the river on the ice, twenty-five miles to Colchester Falls, to get it ground. On his way back, hungry and very tired, he stopped a few miles from home, built a fire, wet up some meal in the top of the bag with water, and baked a little cake on the coals. Then refreshed and somewhat rested he pushed on.

Mrs. Spafford after sitting up till a late hour, watching for his return, lay down and fell asleep and dreamed that he was calling for help. Startled wide awake she listened but heard no sound. Falling asleep, she dreamed the same thing again. Again she awoke, and convinced that Mr. Spafford was in trouble, lighted a torch and ran down to the river, where she found him so exhausted that

he could not get up the bank with his load. Rest, warmth and food restored him to his usual vigor.

They raised a family of four children, Tisdell, John, Milly and _____. Tisdell, afterwards Deacon Spafford was a man who never got out of patience. As he quaintly expressed it, "Just before he got completely out of patience, he always sat down and made up a fresh supply. So he always had some on hand."

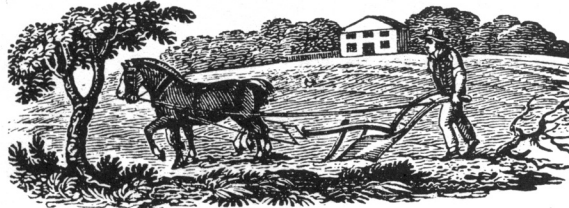
John became a methodist local preacher and was quite eccentric. An old resident says: "I remember seeing him occupy the pulpit of the old church one Sunday in summer dressed in home spun and home woven linen, probably raised on his father's farm. Shirt, vest and trousers were all made of the same material and he wore no coat and was barefoot

"His hat was braided and sewed by his mother from straw raised on their place. In winter his clothing was made of home-made fulled cloth and he wore heavy cowhide boots. In these modern times what would people think to see a minister in the desk clad in such humble attire?"

Mrs. Spafford died in 1839 at the age of eighty-two and Mr. Spafford died in 1840, aged eighty-four,

The following summer, Amos, John and Jonathon Fassett, Stephen Kinsley, Samuel Montague, and John and David Safford from Bennington, and Noah Chittenden from Arlington, soldiers of the Revolution, came on and joined him, their farms all joining each other, near the present village of Cambridge Boro.

On July 1st, 1783, pursuant to a warning in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, a meeting of the proprietors of the Township of Cambridge was held at the house of Jonathan Robinson, in Bennington. John Fassett was chosen moderator, Joseph Safford, Clerk, and Amos Fassett was appointed surveyor to lay out the first-division lots. The records show that these meetings were held occasionally up to April 21, 1795.



On March 29, 1785, the town of Cambridge was organized and on the first page of the book of town records, there appears the following notice: "These certify that all the leaves before in this book were filled with accounts, and were cut out in open town meeting, by order of said meeting, on 29th day of March, being the first town meeting ever held in Cambridge. "Certified this 29th day of March 1785, by me, Johns Fassett, town Clerk."

The following town officers were elected. David Safford, moderator; John Fassett, town clerk; Amos Fassett, Stephen Kinsley and David Safford, selectmen; John Fassett, treasurer; Noah Chittenden, constable; Samuel Montague, grand juror; David Safford, sealer of weights and measures; John Brewster and Noah Chittenden, surveyors of Highways; and Silas Billings, culler of shingles. The first justice of the peace was Amos Fassett, appointed in 1786. Daniel Kinsley was the first representative, elected in 1785.

At one of the proprietors' meetings held September 2nd, 1784 it was voted that John and Benjamin Fassett have the privilege of picking two hundred acres of the undivided land on condition that they have a grist mill running in said town by the first of November 1785. It was also voted that John, Amos and Benjamin Fassett have two hundred acres providing that they have a saw mill ready to saw by the first of November 1784. This sawmill was in running order by the first of December, a month later than the contract called for, but that was overlooked.

Upcoming Events

**July 10th 7:00 pm
Warner Lodge**

A Tribute to Roberta Marsh

Roberta Marsh was a charter member of the CHS and one of the driving forces behind it. She contributed her time, expertise, pies, and beans to the CHS for 20 years. Her voluminous knowledge of the history of our Town cannot be replaced and is already being sorely missed. Please come to this Tribute and tell us of your experience with Roberta. Did she tell you something about your family that you didn't know? Was she instrumental in getting you interested in history? Any and all are welcome - bring your stories, your pictures, and your memories about this remarkable woman.



**August 14th 7:00 pm
Cambridge Community Fellowship Church**

John Quincy Adams: A Spirit Unconquerable!

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that John Quincy Adams "took his tea with sulfuric acid." Perhaps he did, but he also wrote poetry, loved theater, opera, and good wine and company; he held informed views on a myriad of subjects.

Actor Jim Cooke portrays him in the last decade of a remarkable life as he sits for his final portrait. Learn of his part in the creation of the Smithsonian Institute, his defense of the Amistad Africans before the Supreme Court, his dedication of America's first astronomical observatory, and his long fight against the slave-master's Gag Rule in Congress.



This program follows our yearly Chicken BBQ. Tickets for that can be purchased from any CHS Board Member.

**September 11th 7:00 pm
Warner Lodge**

What is it Like to be a New Legislator *Richard Westman & Lucy Rogers*

Many years ago a young Richie Westman went to Montpelier as our Representative. This year a young Lucy Rogers did the same. What is different? What is the same? How does it feel to work in the historic Vermont State House? Come hear Senator Westman and Representative Rogers discuss their impressions of serving the citizens of Cambridge (and other places).



Cambridge Historical Society
PO Box 16
Jeffersonville, VT 05464



We are always looking for articles about the history of the Town of Cambridge.
If you have something interesting to tell us, please let us know.
We also want your feedback about the content of this newsletter.
What do you want to see? What would you prefer not to see?
This is your newsletter, so let us know your opinions.
Contact the Editor at rgtle@stoweaccess.com.

The Historical Society meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month from March through December
at the Warner Lodge on School Street in Jeffersonville. A business meeting with the Board of
Directors starts at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.