

Denmark Historical Society

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Back to School

As our 2011 Denmark students return to school, we share with you information from the 1950 Denmark High School Annual—*The Dehian*. And, a comparison of school budgets, then and now.

In June of 1950 six students graduated from Denmark High School: Ruth Ellen Barton, Robert Henry Holms, Thelma Leona Lord, Dorothy Lois Osgood, Sumner John Silver, and June Margaret Weeman. The principal, John L. Berry, had this to say about Denmark High School, *Our school may be small in enrollment but we believe, in some respects, at least, that our quality compensates the quantity deficiency. For instance, our school has the ranking down to the state department equal to any one of our largest city high schools. Since the year 1918, we have maintained a Class A grade. That means that we are entitled to send students directly to college without their having to take a post-graduate course in either a larger high school or an academy.* Denmark High School was organized in 1893 and closed in 1952.

In 1893, Denmark maintained 11 schools, 11 teachers and 271 students for a total cost of \$2,270.

In 1950, Denmark maintained 2 schools, 5 teachers and 91 students for a total cost of \$13,000.

In 2011, Denmark taxpayers will pay \$1,911,717.00 for 115 Denmark students—about \$16,624 per student.

Highlight

Civil War Presentation

By Stan Cohen

7:00 PM

Thursday, October 13, 2011

Denmark Arts Center

Stan Cohen, of Bridgton, will present a seminar on several Civil War soldiers from Maine and Denmark. His interest in the American Civil War has made him an expert and an engaging teacher of the subject. Stan has taught numerous civil war courses for the Senior College at Bridgton. Civil War era refreshments will be served.

Please join us

Message From the President:

Hi, my name is Daryl Kenison and I was elected President of the Denmark Historical Society (DHS) at the 2011 Annual Meeting, held on July 9th. I was born in the old Bridgton Hospital and my first residence was the old Ralph Bean farm at Head's Corner (now the corner of Heads Hill and Percy True Roads), and currently the home of Alex and Gail MacGregor. I have spent 39 years in the Aerospace industry in Connecticut and Florida. Currently I work part time by computer for a Florida company and plan to retire in November. Even though I now live in Bridgton, my heart is in Denmark and I look forward to leading the DHS. My goals for my first year are to (1) Complete the Denmark Cemetery Collection, (2) Organize the DHS materials into researchable collections, (3) Secure the DHS materials, (4) Subscribe to ancestry.com for DHS use in tracking family ancestors, and (5) Provide at least two DHS public programs. The new slate of officers, also elected at the annual meeting, include Pat Largey, Vice President -- JoAnne Harbourt, Treasurer -- Nancy Sanborn, Secretary, and board members Sonya Allen, Alex MacGregor, and Bill Sanborn. I am looking forward to working with the new board, and especially to working with all of you on preserving Denmark's remarkable history.

Feature Article

The Unknown Poet and the Unknown Soldier

By

Alex MacGregor

Denmark and Chicago – August 7, 2011

Isaac Head (1825-1850) is buried in Denmark's Schoolhouse Cemetery at the end of the Head family plot, which is the westernmost in the row nearest the Town offices on Route 117. The inscription on his tombstone was transcribed in part by my mother-in-law, Dorothy Montgomery Johnson, in 1971; she was interested in the Head family because she lived, as does the present writer, at the crossroads



Schoolhouse Cemetery, Denmark, Maine, located on Route 117 next to the Municipal Building

commonly known as Head's Corner. In her unpublished notes, she commented that there was also an unusually long inscription over and above the usual facts, but did not succeed in transcribing it or taking a rubbing.

The tombstone was then "copied" by Ruth Taverner and Ola-Mae Wheaton in 1985 for inclusion in *The Cemeteries of Denmark*, a manuscript compilation by the Molly Ockett Daughters of the American Revolution (available in the Denmark Library), where it appears on p. 97. But they only transcribed the name and dates, and do not even mention the existence of the illegible inscription.

The inscription is in fact a poem eleven lines long, an elegant epitaph. Though the words are hard to read, the hand of the stonecutter was well-formed and predictable, and the poem proved to be typical of its period in meter and diction, which is predictable in its own way. It was thus possible to recover the poem in its entirety.

That is, if "mourn" ends a line of text, and "borne" is seen to end the next line, then lines of verse are in question and the couplet form is established. That makes life easier, since there are only so many rhymes for a given word. Comparable necessities of grammatical syntax, and sense, emerged in the course of decipherment, and bit by bit the text could be recovered.

Isaac Head

Died

Apr. 24, 1850

Aet <atis> 25 yrs.

*Brother and Son and Friend the loss we mourn,
A loss, alas! How grievous to be borne!
In thy young morn of life when all seemed fair,
Gone to the grave, to sleep forever there.
O, not forever, when a few more hours
Have dewed thy grave with tears and strewed with flowers.
The stricken hearts that weep thy early doom
Shall greet thee rising from thy ransomed tomb
And hope and life and love in heavenly beauty bloom.*

The Inscription on the Tombstone of Isaac Head

Feature Article (Continued)

The heroic couplets of the epitaph were common in English epitaphs, which were modeled on the Latin elegiac couplet; the concluding tercet or triplet was a common device too, along with the emphatic final Alexandrine, with six beats rather than five.

Such epitaphs were the stock-in-trade of the monument maker; for examples see *Over Their Dead Bodies*, which unfortunately is not available as I write. The first verse easily reworks into “Mother and faithful Wife, our loss &c,” or for all of the “Good Dog and faithful Friend whose loss &c;” many combinations suggest themselves. The third verse, appropriate for the premature deaths all too common at the time, could easily be tweaked into “Past thy long dusk, a life that shone so fair/sinks in the grave....”

It is possible that “strewed” is a slip for the more usual participle “strewn.” The poet, though loves alliteration, and the internal rhyme may well have been deliberate. There is one definite mistake. The text as printed above has been corrected. In the original, a period stood after “doom” in verse 7; but there was no punctuation at the end of v. 6. At first glance that makes good sense, and the image of the flowers bestrewing the hearts of the mourners is quite striking. But “Shall greet” in v. 8 is thus left without a subject; that reveals the mistake. We should not be surprised, though; the stonecutter was paid to chisel, not think, and the Latinate syntax misled him; “thy grave” is the direct object shared by both “dewed” and “strewed.” But even if he caught his mistake, there was nothing he could do about the nonsensical period after “doom;” chisels don’t have erasers. **The story of Isaac Head will be concluded in the December Newsletter. Learn more about Denmark's Head Family and the Unknown Soldier.**

Isaac Head Tombstone



The method Alex MacGregor used to decipher the writing on the Isaac Head tombstone:

“The poem was not cut as deep as the names and date; as a result, there was too little contrast with the dull gray surface of the slate for the poem to be read off by the naked eye when I stood well above it. I brought out sufficient contrast by rubbing a white paste of BonAmi kitchen cleanser into the inscription, then lay on my stomach with a bug-bomb, zapping ground hornets from a nearby nest every so often, while I puzzled the poem out a couple lines at a time over several days. Slow but steady wins the race, if you ever have to decipher anything like it.”

Calendar of Events

- Monday, September 12, 2011 - 7:00 PM – DHS Business Meeting
- Monday, October 10, 2011 - 7:00 PM -- DHS Workshop (Denmark Cemeteries)
- Thursday, October 13, 2011 – 7:00 PM – Civil War Seminar with Stan Cohen
- Monday, November 14, 2011 – 7:00 PM – DHS Business Meeting
- Monday, December 12, 2011 – 7:00 PM – DHS Workshop (Christmas in Denmark)

History Quiz

Current Contest

What was the exact dedication date (mm/dd/yy) for the "Honor Roll" commemorating Denmark citizens who served their country in time of war? The earliest correct entry wins!

Send your answer to
denmarkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Spring 2011 Newsletter Winner

The question was, Who designed and in what year did the dedication of the Soldier's Monument occur? Lee Follett, of Denmark, answered correctly with:
...designed by John Horrigan, and dedicated on June 25, 1913. Congratulations Lee!

Winners receive one year membership to DHS. A \$10 donation will be made to the DHS in the name of a Lifetime member who wins. Winners must wait one year before entering the contest again.

In Memory of

Elizabeth "Betty" Bucknell

January 10, 1930 to July 18, 2011

Betty was born in Denmark, the daughter of Kenneth and Emma Trumbell Lord. She attended Denmark schools. She was a member of the Denmark Congregational Church, and a 50 year plus member of the Rebekahs. Betty liked to hunt and fish and go camping with her family. She enjoyed knitting, reading and was well known for her famous spaghetti sauce. Betty also loved spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband of 40 years, Roger Bucknell; two sons, Thomas Richardson and Kenneth Richardson; a daughter, Katherine Lord; and a brother, Percy Lord; a sister, Marion Monson; three grandchildren and two great-granddaughters.

The Trumbell, Bucknell, and Richardson families are among some of the earliest residents of Denmark.



A Man's Work...

Part of the uniqueness of Denmark is the story of Peter Rouchey and his clock. It isn't syncopated, but it's everything else. A marvelous thing to look at, even before you know the background. The clock stands about three feet high and is perhaps two feet wide. The case is ornately carved, and nine different kinds of wood – locust, beech, cypress, ash, black maple, walnut, and yellow, white and black birch – are inlaid in intricate designs.

Pete began working on his clock back in the twenties; it took four and a half years of his spare time to complete. Every bit of it, the works, as well as the case, is completely handmade. The metal hands on the clock, the metal hour numbers, are all fashioned by hand. On top is a weathervane; instead of the conventional rooster there is a modernistic fish-like symbol. A cuckoo pops out to announce the hour and half-hour. This clock gives the time of day, hour, minute and second; the day of the week; the day of the month; and the year. All of this operates on one mechanism. Pete, who could not read, had to figure it out for himself. He fitted the cogs this way and that, spending long hours on the mechanism alone, until it was finally coordinated. Pete's beautiful clock was given to his daughter, Mrs. Rosanna Smith in 1958, then of East Denmark, upon the death of this creative Denmark resident.

Business in Denmark: Then and Now

Cardinal Printing was established in Denmark Village in 1946 by brothers Clyde and Kermit Sanborn. They started their business next to the Odd Fellows Hall, which is now the Denmark Arts Center. They moved the business to its present location at 33 East Main Street in 1957, where they had their brother Frank build the building. The story has been told that the walls are insulated with beer and whiskey bottles.



Cardinal Printing Building c1990

Kermit left the business to start his career in sales in the graphic arts business and Clyde continued to run the business with his wife, Shirley, and about six employees. In 1966 they put an addition on the back of the shop to start using offset printing. Before that they did everything with handset letterpress with lead type. They employed many part-time people to help with folding, collating, and all the hand work that used to be a major part of the operation. The story is that Clyde was very slow in billing his customers and used to offer them a discount for late billings. Clyde sold the business in 1988 to Robert Lawson who ran it for five years. In 1993, brothers Jim and Butch Stacy, along with their wives, Celia and Denise purchased Cardinal Printing. They ran it together for one year before Butch and Denise decided it was too much to handle along with their successful burner service. Jim and Celia decided to carry on—and eighteen years later, they are still at it.

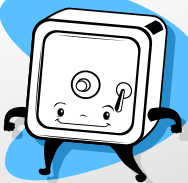
Things have changed drastically from those first days of operation, requiring hand developing of negatives, plates, and the stripping of every job—to that of today's digital plates and printing. In those labor intensive days, for example, they printed 2600 copies of an eighty-page Town Report. The job took two weeks to complete. With today's automation, they can complete the same order in two days! They now offer direct mailing and design services, full color printing, and the design and sublimation printing of mugs, t-shirts, and more.



Cardinal Printing as it appears today with a peaked roof added

Many an annual Town Report, local wedding announcements, and reams of charity announcement posters have been printed by Denmark's Cardinal Printing. This business is an important historic symbol in the village, provides essential services, and is an invaluable supporter of the Denmark Historical Society. We wish them another 65 successful years!

Where Is It Now???



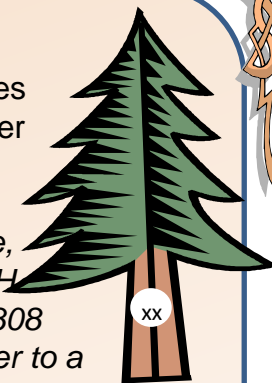
The case of the missing safe! For years, the selectmen of Denmark debated about the need to purchase a town safe to provide fireproofing and security for town records. According to the March 1913 Annual Report they finally approved the funds for a safe. The safe cost \$125. According to the 1977 publication of *Denmark Maine Past and Present* by Sylvia Davis MacDonald, Rita LaMountain, and E. Blanche Warren Anthony, in 1976 the safe was still in the "Town House." The mystery is that no one now seems to know what became of it or whether the contents of the safe were ever removed! Do you know??

Denmark Doings

200 Years Ago

In 1811, Denmark was barely four years old. The following is a description of the boundaries that made up the newly incorporated Town of Denmark. Is it any wonder that 100 years later (see below) that Denmark and its neighboring towns were still feuding about town lines.

...in said county of Oxford and all the land contained with the following boundaries, viz: Beginning at the northern corner of Fryeburg and running south by Bridgton to Baldwin line, then south sixty degrees west, six hundred and one rods to a beach tree marked IIEBJADH 1808, south eighty-seven degrees west, thirteen hundred rods to a red oak tree marked 1808 DJAIPH standing on the bank of Saco river opposite to Brownfield line, then up by said river to a pine tree marked ANOISIFB, thence north twelve degrees west, eight hundred and fifteen rods to a maple tree by Pleasant Pond, thence northward by the pond afore mentioned to Fryeburg line, thence north forty three and half degrees east by Fryeburg...



150 Years Ago

The 1861 Denmark Annual Report says that a bounty of \$100 was paid to each Denmark man who enlisted in the Union Army. However this poster issued in 1861 by the Bridgton Center Recruiting Office claims to pay a total of \$502. \$100 before the soldier left the state to serve with the \$402 dollars to follow. Bounties were discontinued when both the North and South initiated a form of draft.



100 Years Ago

The town line between Denmark and Sebago was perambulated, but the selectman of the two towns failed to agree on the findings. Acting upon a petition from the town of Sebago, a court commission was appointed to determine the actual town lines for both Hiram and Denmark, and Sebago and Denmark. The commission completed its work, verified the evidence, and found the lines as claimed by Denmark to be correct. Monuments marking the town lines were ordered and placed.

50 Years Ago

Denmark resident, Mrs. Cora Hall retires after 16 years of teaching in Denmark schools. As a child, Cora lived with her parents, Scott and Isabelle (McPherson) Wentworth at what is now *The Farm* on Route 117. Cora attended Denmark schools, graduated from Bridgton Academy and Farmington Normal School. She began teaching in Denmark in 1911 at the Colby schoolhouse for \$7 a week including board. Cora returned to Denmark in 1946, after the death of her first husband. She resumed her teaching career and taught until 1961.

2011: History Under Development

It is the dream of organizers of the first annual 2011 Western Maine BBQ Festival that 50 to 100 years from now the BBQ festival will be as well loved and as recognized as is the Fryeburg Fair and other well-know Maine summer festivals. The festival was founded by the Denmark Lions Club to provide opportunities for Maine Lions Clubs to raise money for the charities they support and to promote Lionism—a philosophy of community involvement, service to others and philanthropy. With over 135 community and Lion Club volunteers—many from Denmark and some from as far away as Florida; and a successful first event under their belts—the dream is alive! Volunteerism Rocks!



Where Good Friends Meet...

Denmark Families

Ames

According to the Maine Historical Society, Joshua Ames became a citizen of Denmark in 1807, the year Denmark was incorporated and the town line between Brownfield and Denmark was changed. Joshua was one of three of the first Selectmen to serve the fledging town of Denmark. He brought with him experience gained when serving in 1803 as a Brownfield Selectman. The 1850 Register of the free inhabitants of Denmark lists a Joshua Ames (age 48) married to Jane Berry (granddaughter of Isaac Berry), and a William Ames (44) married to Betsy Claressa. This puts the birth year of the two Ames men at 1802 and 1806, respectively. The relationship between the two Ames families and the 1807 Selectmen Ames is unknown. Unknown as well is how one John Ames of Denmark fits into the picture. John Ames was a private in the Revolutionary War and participated in the defense of Portland during the war of 1812. DHS has recently joined www.ancestry.com. We hope to use this tool to solve this and many other Denmark family mysteries. Look for future information about www.ancestry.com and the Ames family.

Denmark: Points of Interest



The Goodwin Family Cemetery

There are 23 cemeteries and burial grounds located throughout Denmark. The oldest of these is the Lowell Cemetery located off of Hio Ridge Road, dated to 1812. The Goodwin Cemetery, located on the west side of Route 117 just before the Bridgton line is not quite that old, but its oldest stone is dated 1841. This family cemetery reflects most of those found in Denmark. It too is in need of attention and repair. Inscriptions are fast fading from the markers, and most of all, it is indicative of the realities of life in the mid-19th century. People who survived to adulthood had a much shorter life span and many infants and children died young. Of the 21 Goodwin family members interned in this cemetery, nine were children, seven of them died under the age of two. A major project for the DHS in the coming year will be to update and computerize our cemetery information before it is lost.

Small Town Stuff

A recent dialog between Kate Griffith and Denmark's Postmaster, David Knight: "You are probably tired of trying to stuff mail into my post office box," said Kate, "I haven't picked my mail up for three days." "Nope," replied our Postmaster, David. "I saw your car up at Rusty Stacy's Service Center and figured you wouldn't be around for a few days, so I took it out and put it in a box for you." "Here it is."

Small Town Stuff is one of the things that makes living in Denmark so special. If you have a small town story please share it with us. Write to denmarkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

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