



SUTTON NOW & THEN

The Newsletter of the Sutton Historical Society

Founded 1985

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Sutton Historical Society

PO Box 457
South Sutton, NH
03273

• suttonnhhistory@gmail.com

• suttonhistoricalsociety.org

• chuffed.org/project/shs-meetinghouse-restoration

REMINDERS:

Check our website and Facebook page for programs additions!

Please support the Stewardship Fund.

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SHS Awarded Second LCHIP Grant

The Sutton Historical Society has received its second Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant award toward completion of the exterior renovation of the iconic South Sutton Meetinghouse. The Society has been awarded a \$20,000 matching grant to address the remainder of the recommended exterior restoration, including repair of clapboard siding, trim and shutters, and painting the remaining restored building exterior. SHS has contracted with Wardell Paint & Co. of Concord to put these finishing touches on the meetinghouse project in late summer/early fall.

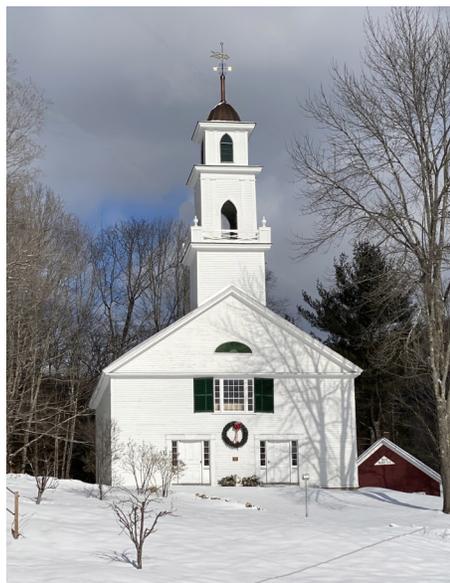
“SHS is honored to be selected for a second

matching LCHIP grant,” said Board President Bob Wright. “We’ve known that the exterior restoration of the meetinghouse is a significant project and had concerns about successfully identifying funding sources to cover

the substantial costs. The LCHIP award will enable SHS to fulfill its stewardship responsibilities for the Meetinghouse restoration.”

LCHIP grant recipients are required to raise a minimum of one dollar for each dollar provided by LCHIP. This year’s statewide awards of \$4.7 million will be matched by \$19 million that the project proponents will raise from other public and private sources, infusing a total of twenty-three million dollars into the state’s economy in direct project activity.

SHS is again raising the funds to match this latest LCHIP grant and cover the additional costs of second phase of



South Meetinghouse shines this winter with its newly restored tower and windows.

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Join Us at the Meetinghouse

By Judy Lowe

SHS is pleased to sponsor an engaging program entitled *New England's Colonial Meetinghouses and their Impact on American Society* presented by Paul Wainwright. The program is funded by a New Hampshire Humanities

Community Project Grant to support public humanities programs across New Hampshire. Long in the making, SHS had originally scheduled this program in 2020 but has been forced to postpone throughout the pandemic.

The newly (almost) restored South Sutton Meetinghouse will be the appropriate venue for this interesting program. New England's colonial meetinghouses embody an important yet little-known

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President's Notes

Since much has happened and is happening, I would like to share with you some mid-season updates for your Sutton Historical Society:

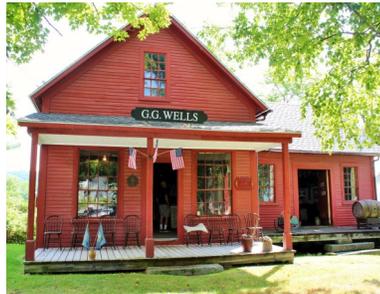
- The Meetinghouse has its new dome, the weather vane has been restored, the steeple is replaced and is sound, the windows restored, electricity has been added, and under LCHIP guidelines lightning protection and the potential rotting underneath the building has been corrected. Exterior restoration and painting will be performed in the summer and fall of this year.
- The Sutton Board of Selectmen has investigated the Old Store Museum and will correct any deficiencies. This building is owned by the Town of Sutton, the town is responsible for its maintenance, and the Board of Selectmen willingly take on this responsibility.
- SHS board member and Program Chair, Judy Lowe, is scheduling programs that will further utilize the meetinghouse. The



President Bob Wright (r) cheers the rainy return of the steeple with VP Sue Esposito and Andy Jeffrey

first is currently planned for early August. We will, as always, celebrate Old Home Day.

- Board member, Gary Delert, is researching information of costs and work needed to repair and upgrade District No. 9 Schoolhouse - the one room schoolhouse that is behind the meetinghouse. Gary's estimates will include a new roof, painting, refurbishment of the inside and the possible addition of indoor bathroom facilities.
- Since last fall, SHS has received some historical gifts, and along with that, the Society will receive an eight-foot class case to house these gifts and other items from our collections. The display case will be placed in the Cressey House headquarters. One of the gifts re-



SHS maintains the museum contents of the town owned Old Store Museum

ceived is a ceramic Staffordshire teapot from the late eighteenth century donated by Ann and Steve Lord.

- This month on the third Wednesday @ 4:00 PM to be exact, the SHS board will be meeting in person at the Cressey House. We, as an organization, and I, as your president, are fortunate to have strong and active board members. We accomplished much during this coronavirus experience, but Zoom meetings cannot replace in person meetings, and all the board members and committee chairs welcome a return to in-person gathering. The life blood of an organization is its board, and I have and will be reaching out to encourage members to serve and guide the organization in this capacity.

As president, and when I am not president, I remain your obedient servant,

Robert W. Wright, Jr.

Calling All Bakers!

Sometimes it's the little things that make the most lasting impact. One of things many of us have missed because of pandemic precautions is the opportunity to purchase home baked goodies and donate to a good cause.

SHS is pleased to announce the return of Bake Sales! And yes, the Cookie Walk! There are a number of



events coming up throughout the year where SHS will need our talented bakers to whip up some wonderful goodies for the bake sale table. This year SHS plans to bake up

a storm for Farm Days (August 27 & 28) and Harvest Day (October 2) at Muster Field Farm, as well as town elections for the primary (September 13) and general election (November 8). The December date for the Cookie Walk is TBD.

If you'd like to contribute home baked yumminess to any of these events, please call Sue Esposito at 603-927-4946. She will add you to the call list for upcoming baking events. Many thanks!

Second LCHIP Grant *from Page 1*

work. Thanks to our generous donors, the Society successfully raised funds to match its first LCHIP grant and 1772 Foundation grant, enabling the completion of the first phase of the meetinghouse exterior restoration last fall.

SHS could not have completed the first phase without the enthusiastic support of our membership and our community. It's been a pleasure working with talented local contractors like Nate Burrington, Arch Weathers, Will Priestley and Jay Tucker. SHS Director Andy Jeffrey did a yeoman's job as project manager on behalf of SHS.



Burrington Builders crew recognized by SHS. (l-r) Coral, Dee, Nate and Louis Burrington.

It is unusual for an historical society to own the historic buildings. Typically, such properties in New Hampshire are owned by towns or other associations and the local historical societies are responsible for the operation of the facilities acting as agents for the town. This unusual arrangement creates unique challenges for an organization that relies solely on the donations of generous individuals and the efforts of unpaid volunteers. "We are grateful that opportunities like LCHIP exist to help with some portion of funds for what are significant and costly projects for a small volunteer organization," shared Bob Wright.

The Society looks forward to having the newly restored structure back online for programs later in 2022. As work wraps up, we plan to celebrate onsite to thank the community and mark the completion of such a meaningful project.



SHS Board celebrates completion of tower and window restoration with contractors last December.

SHS Committee Chairs

Membership	Rob O'Neil	938-5325
Newsletter	Dorothy Jeffrey	938-2457
Publicity	Marilou Steblai	938-2300
Scholarships	Karla Salathe	927-4325
Town History	Jack Noon	456-3426
Buildings & Grounds	Bruno Steblai	938-2300
Archives	Don Davis	927-4925
Community Outreach		
Finance		

2022 SHS Board

OFFICERS

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Bob Wright	President	938-5504	2022	Peggy Ford	927-4614 lapeg3@gmail.com	2022
Sue Esposito	Vice President	927-4946 wilderness20@tds.net	2022	Jenny Menning	252-7337 jennymenning60@gmail.com	2022
Rob O'Neil	Treasurer	938-5325 r_oneil@mcttelecom.com	2023	Andy Jeffrey	938-2457 andy@proactivegrowth.com	2023
Dorothy Jeffrey	Clerk	938-2457 djeffrey@comcast.net	2022	Judy Lowe	927-4247 judylowe@tds.net	2024
Don Davis	Ex-Officio	927-4925 grampad@tds.net	2022	Gary Dellert	207-838-0321 dellert.gary@gmail.com	2024

Scholarship Application Deadline May 1

Members are reminded that SHS offers scholarship opportunities for graduating high school seniors who meet the eligibility requirements. The deadline to apply for the 2022 Barrows and Jane B. Pratt Scholarship awards is May 1.

Eligibility criteria include:

- The student is a resident of Sutton.
- The student's parents/guardians are current members in good standing of the Historical Society for the past two consecutive years.
- The student is a high school senior and has been accepted to a higher-level educational institution and provides the name and location of the institution with the application.
- The student submits an essay of at least 800 words about how living in Sutton has shaped their life and contributed to future plans and goals. The essay is to be submitted in Word document format.
- The student must provide GPA and any extra-curricular and/or community service activities they

are or have been involved in, along with the essay. Applicants must also supply a current photo in JPG format.

Applications may be emailed as an attachment by the May 1 deadline to suttonnhhistory@gmail.com or to Karla Salathe, Scholarship Committee Chair at ksalathe@kearsarge.org. Questions? Contact Karla.

The scholarship fund was generously established by Jane and Fritz Pratt, first known as the Martha W. and Fred H. Barrows, Jr. Scholarship in memory of Jane's parents. Upon Jane's death in 2008, the award was renamed the Barrows and Jane B. Pratt Scholarship to honor Jane. Fritz, who passed in late 2019, insisted that all eligible students receive the scholarship. Some years there are multiple recipients, other years there are none.

Consider joining SHS ahead to qualify underclassmen interested in future scholarships.



We want to hear your story!

[Send us your stories](#) to share with our readers about all things *Sutton Now & Then*.

- Unique family stories passed on from Sutton ancestors or experienced yourself
- Memories of ...
- Genealogy research ...
- And more

Join Us at the Meetinghouse *from Page 1*

chapter in American history. Built mostly with tax money, they served as both places of worship and places for town meetings and were the centers of life in colonial New England communities. Using photographs of the few surviving "mint condition" meetinghouses as illustrations, Paul Wainwright tells the story of the society that built

and used them, and the lasting impact they have had on American culture.

The New Hampshire Humanities Council notes that, "Paul's presentation provides a solid overview of colonial society and its values through examining a type of building that many of his audiences may be familiar with in very general terms, but have never stopped to consider. He answers the Who, What, When, Where and Why questions of Colonial Meetinghouses, and



NEW HAMPSHIRE
humanities

Connecting people with ideas

makes the connections between the culture of those people who constructed these buildings and our democratic and community values today."

The program will be open to the public at no charge. SHS will sponsor a social hour with refreshments immediately following the presentation. Questions? Contact Judy Lowe at 603-927-4247. [More information is available here.](#)

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, August 6, 2022 at 4 PM

South Sutton Meetinghouse

How You Can Support SHS

As a small volunteer organization, SHS has big plans and responsibilities. Our mission is to proudly steward the historical structures, artifacts, heritage, and legacy of Sutton's rich cultural history for current and future generations. We are dedicated to fostering awareness and inspiring future Sutton historians through a shared understanding of our past and our efforts to preserve, maintain, educate, share, and research the history of Sutton.

We are an independent, nonprofit, member-supported organization



Gleaming new windows lighten the meetinghouse interior.

that depends solely on a variety of forms of contributions from people like you. Unlike most historical societies that ordinarily sponsor collections and research projects, SHS is also the steward for several historic buildings in Sutton on top of the typical responsibilities. Your membership dues, financial contributions, and donations of your valuable time and many contributions in-kind are what makes SHS sustainable.

With the second LCHIP grant to complete the meetinghouse restoration, SHS must raise funds for the matching grant. We are also aware that we can no longer postpone needed repairs to the District No. 9 Schoolhouse. SHS will once again participate in NH Gives to help



raise necessary funds for current restoration efforts. Your [NH Gives donation this June](#) can have twice as much impact during Giving Day because we have a donor who is generously matching donations dollar-for-dollar - up to \$5,000.

We also need volunteers to help in many ways, from joining the SHS board, baking for SHS bake sales, helping to catalog the archives, tidy the meetinghouse for a program gathering, and much more. Every donation, whether time, money, or materials is what keeps the Society functioning. Every bit helps and we greatly appreciate anything that you can do to help SHS care for Sutton's historic treasures. For more information, [please visit our website](#).

Betty's Travels

By Sue Esposito

Winter has turned to spring out west in Cheyenne, Wyoming, new home to Sutton's much loved lifelong resident, Betty Whittemore, who relocated last fall to be closer to her distaff offspring. In early December, Betty moved into her new rental with daughter Robin, happy to have her belongings from Sutton surrounding her in her new home. Despite thinking that she had downsized accordingly prior to moving west, Betty may have brought more than needed to furnish her new digs!

Betty turned 90 years old on December 4th and was appropriately

surprised by the party thrown by her Wyoming family. She was also delighted by the many cards she received from her Sutton friends and family back home.

Betty is thrilled to be able to see many family members since the move. It took a little time to get settled and become accustomed to the altitude difference and new surroundings. You don't live in one spot for 90 years and instantly acclimate to a new place! Betty misses everyone in Sutton very much and is always interested in hearing about everything that's going on.

Robin is keeping Betty on the move and she's been busy with knitting



Ninety years young!

projects. Betty will become a great grandma again, as son Barry's daughter is expecting twin girls in July. Guess Betty is knitting for two!

Sutton's School Districts and Schoolhouses

By Don Davis

Education has played an important role in Sutton's history. During the last years of the 18th century and the first years of the 19th century the state legislature passed a series of laws that required towns to raise money to support public schools and establish school districts within the town. Sutton was ahead of the game and had five districts laid out before the state requirements took effect. The number and location of Sutton school districts varied throughout the years with population shifts and challenges presented by Sutton's geography. Schooling took place in private homes during the earliest years of Sutton's incorporation. The first schoolhouse was built in 1798 after town meeting voted to appropriate funds to construct schoolhouses for the existing five districts at the time.

"schollars" [sic] in town. By the time of the 1914 annual report there only 63 school children in town and only four school districts remained. The best source for determining the location of the fifteen odd district schoolhouses is the 1858 Walling map of Merrimack County, according to Noon's *History Volume III*.

Each district was originally governed by its own separate board. Inequities were common as some



At its peak in the 1870's, Sutton school districts numbered fifteen. The number of districts naturally declined and consolidated as the town population declined. To put this in perspective, Jack Noon's *History of Sutton, New Hampshire Volume III* states that in 1858 there were four hundred and seventy-nine

districts operated with lower budgets and fewer school days. As the 19th century drew to a close New Hampshire passed a legislative experi-

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ment that instructed towns to have a single school board oversee the operation of all public schools, all to be owned and operated by the town and not by individual districts. The trial would last five years after which each town could elect to return to the old system or continue with the new arrangement; Sutton chose to continue with the new.

As Jack Noon reported in the detailed chapter on Sutton Schools in *History Volume III*, "district schoolhouses were short on comfort and conveniences compared with what we've grown used to in modern times. They were uninsulated or

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poorly insulated buildings which were heated by wood ... that couldn't hold a fire overnight ... Outhouses provided the toilet facilities for the schools until the mid to late 1920s, when they were replaced by "chemical closets" ... Lighting in the schoolhouses was generally poor on cloudy days." In 1945 the school superintendent recommended that Sutton "consider construction of a three-room school building with modern equipment. In addition to the classrooms there should be a lunch room, a kitchen, and a teacher's room or nurse's room where sick pupils may rest until taken home."

The last three districts to be served by their respective one-room district schoolhouses were South Sutton, Sutton Mills, and North Sutton. The era of the one-room schoolhouse ended in February 1954 with the opening of the newly constructed Sutton Central School.

Once a schoolhouse was closed, the building was usually sold through a vote at town meeting. In many cases the schoolhouses were converted to a home or to some other use. Of the fifteen schoolhouses that served the 15 districts fewer than half a dozen remain standing and are still used to some degree.

Only one, the Historical Society's District No. 9 South Village School is open for public use. After closing



So. Sutton, N.H.
School House
Circa 1910

in 1954 it was purchased by the Old Home Day Association and was maintained by the Friends of the South Sutton Schoolhouse. In 1995 the schoolhouse was acquired by the Sutton Historical Society, who is responsible for its stewardship.

Today the District No. 9 schoolhouse needs significant restoration and repair. An historical buildings conditions assessment prepared for SHS in 2019 detailed and prioritized needed repairs and maintenance to both the meetinghouse and Schoolhouse No. 9. SHS tackled the restoration of the meetinghouse exterior first, but the condition of Schoolhouse No. 9 only continues to deteriorate while waiting its turn in the restoration queue. That time is coming, as SHS is actively assembling plans and identifying funds to both restore and improve Sutton's remaining publicly accessible mid-nineteenth century one-room schoolhouse. Proposed plans include the obvious repair or replacement of deteriorated features like the

schoolhouse roof and interior walls and ceilings. SHS is also discussing the possible addition of improvements such as restroom facilities that would significantly enhance the available use of both historic buildings. We'd love to see the newly restored meetinghouse frequented for meetings, concerts, weddings, services, and other gatherings given appropriate facilities.

SHS NEEDS YOU!

It takes a village to maintain many villages! SHS operates only because people like you become involved. We have numerous opportunities and welcome your support.

- Seeking new board members. SHS meets monthly.
- Join a committee and help insure the care of historical structures, artifacts, heritage and legacy of Sutton's rich cultural history for current and future generations. INTERNS WELCOME!
- Sign up for a specific event to bake, sell boutique items, set up, organize and more.

Contact us today at:
suttonnhhistory@gmail.com



SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 457
South Sutton, NH 03273



Please support the SHS Stewardship Fund and restore our Meetinghouse

Join us!

We invite you to join the Sutton Historical Society or renew your membership. Please mail the form below with your dues and/or additional contribution to the Stewardship Fund. Be sure to include your email address. We welcome volunteers to help SHS preserve our Sutton heritage and contribute to ongoing projects. Volunteers are needed for the Meetinghouse restoration effort and much more.

SHS 2022 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Email _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please select: New Member Renewal

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers are needed to help paint the Meetinghouse, bake for fundraising events, catalog historical records and much more.

ANNUAL DUES

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Member | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Individual | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Couple | \$400 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Sponsor | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Contribution | \$ _____ |

Mail this form with your check to:
SHS PO Box 457 South Sutton, NH 03273

Sutton Historical Society is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Membership includes a subscription to *Now and Then*, the newsletter of the Sutton Historical Society. Members are eligible for the Barrows and Jane B. Pratt Memorial Scholarship.

Thank you for your support!