

Franconia Heritage News



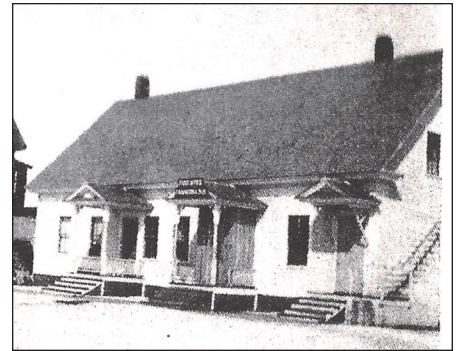
Early Franconia School Houses & Districts

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According to the 1790 census, Franconia had 72 residents, consisting of 16 families. At least nine of these families had children under the age of 16. The Selectmen voted in 1798 to divide the town into two school districts, East and West. By 1806 the population had doubled

and the town was re-divided into three school districts: North, South and East. Redistricting occurred several more times until there were a total of seven school districts in 1852. Each of these districts acted independently, voting at local annual meetings on such items as building a school house, how to maintain it, what teacher to hire and at what salary, the length of each school term, who would supply the firewood. The total school tax collected annually by the town was divided among the districts according to the number of scholars in the district.

As recorded in the earliest volume of Franconia town meeting minutes, on May 28, 1806, the inhabitants belonging to the first school ward voted to build a school "at the Crotch of the road by the Bridge that leads over the river into John Aldrich's meadow." They voted to raise \$150 to erect a building "24 feet by 28 and ten feet studded and set up well from the ground and a hipt roof."



Remodeled and expanded
Village School House

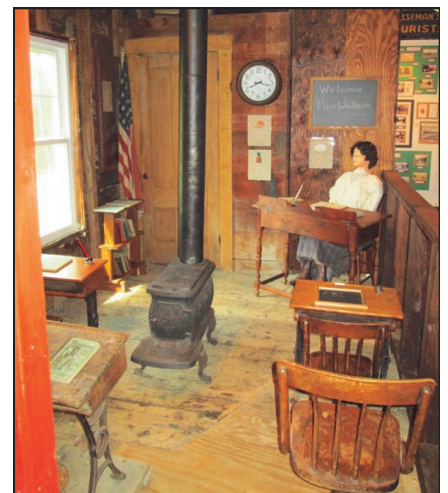


Grimes School House

Zeb Applebee, John Aldrich and Luke Brooks formed a committee to superintend the construction. About a year later at another meeting, they voted to raise \$65 to finish the school house, but it took another \$20 to get the job completed. This may have been the first school house built in Franconia. Its location was on today's Lafayette Road off of the Easton Road, close to where the first settlement of farms was located, before there was a village built near the Lower Iron Works.

Another early school house was the one built for the village children in the North school district, later called District No. 1. It was built on a designated "school lot" set aside during the initial laying out of Franconia's lots and ranges. This land was at the far north end of Main Street. By 1818, it was already in need of repair and painting. In 1836, it was voted to build a wood shed beside it, but this was not accomplished until 1838. In 1851, the district vacillated between building a new school house or moving the existing one. A compromise seemed to have been reached as the old building was moved up the road to a quarter-acre lot bought from the New Hampshire Iron Factory Co. (about where Mac's is today), and its footprint was increased plus a second story hall was added. The building served many purposes before being torn down in 1962.

The Grimes School House was built further along the Easton Road by men of the neighborhood in 1846, on land once owned by Alvin Grimes. Early on
(continued on pg 2)



One-room school house created this spring in the museum as part of the *Readin' Ritin' & Rhythmic* exhibit.

Parker & Young Saw Mill

Franconia had its share of saw mills – Luke Brooks had one on Copper Mine Brook, Stephen Eaton’s near the Stone Stack, Brooks & Whitney’s where the Woodsville Guaranty Bank is today, the Sherburn’s at Pinestead Farm – but did you know that the Parker & Young Company of Lisbon had one along the Gale River in the vicinity of Hillwinds lodging units?

Parker & Young manufactured piano sounding boards, boxes, bobbins and chair stock, all of which required lots of wood. They owned vast acreage of timberlands in Grafton County, including 80 acres they acquired from E. B. Parker of Franconia in 1917. This land included much of what is now Fox Hill Park. The deed excluded certain stands of trees but read pertaining to the rest: “I give grant sell and convey the right to cut remove and stack said lumber and to set up a saw mill on said lot of land any time within ten years after which time this conveyance is null and void.”

The Littleton Courier reported on January 11, 1923, that “Parker & Young saw mill started Monday” and had a similar statement in their January 26, 1928, issue. According to the town tax records, the mill was assessed at \$1,000 in 1921, 1926 and 1927; at \$800 from 1928 to 1930. In the late 1920’s, the company reorganized to become the Lisbon Company, and by 1933 had stopped its Franconia operations and had sold its Franconia land.

In an interview in 2002 at the museum, Archie Herbert gave quite an accounting of this saw mill. “There were two saw mills in Franconia at the same time. One was opposite here, where Hillwinds is—and then the one in the middle of town. This one here was much bigger than

the other one in town. A lot bigger. In fact, they had a small railroad that would go around through the fields over there to pile the lumber on, and after that closed down, the railroad and the hand car were still there. My cousin and I used to go over there and ride it. They put the lumber on, and took them way out into the forest – well, into the fields it was in those days –now it’s all forest – to stack them up – to stack up the lumber. They [the saw mills] were both going at the same time but this one up here was probably three times as big – it was a huge thing. I think it was owned by some people from Lisbon but I’m not exactly sure. Don’t think anybody in Franconia owned it or had anything to do with it, other than working in it. I have no idea when it shut down – I can remember being there when I was in second or fourth grade, that section of time.” [Archie was born in 1914.]

Wayne Blodgett also mentioned the tracks in an interview in 1995. “Two of the carts were still there. We used to push them back and forth on the tracks. Somebody got the smart idea of taking it over on that little hill, between the school and the next house, run down the hill, until some kid got hurt and that was the end of that. After that, that little wheeled train was there for years. I’m sure it got picked up in World War II. But I never knew where those tracks went to. They aimed right down Harvard Street, or right beside it. The carts were about 4 x 6. They were shaped just like a regular railroad car wheel, only a little smaller.”

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School Houses & Districts (continued from page 1)

it was known as the Brooks School House. In December of 1968, while being used as a barn by Sam Eli, it was destroyed by a fire.

The first school house for District No. 7 was built shortly after 1852 in the vicinity of Coal Hill. The *White Mountain Republic* newspaper reported in May, 1888, that “The old No. 7 school house has been torn down, and the frame and lumber moved onto a new site between C.B. Young’s and Hermon Tewksbury’s, where a new house will be built this summer.” This new location was on Profile Road a little ways beyond the Coal Hill Road turn-off.

By 1888, many of the younger school children, especially those living in the village proper, attended classes in the basement of Dow Academy that had opened in 1885. A town committee voted to dispose of the village school house in Dist. No. 1, to sell two others, and to repair and relocate the remaining two. During the 1890’s, it was suggested several times to discontinue the schools outside of the village, but no action was taken until the town and the Dow trustees joined forces in building the second Dow Academy in 1903 to replace the first one that burned down in late 1902.

To learn more about one-room school houses in Franconia, Easton and Sugar Hill, come see our museum exhibit **Readin’ Ritin’ & Rjthmetic** which will remain in place through the 2015 season.

2014 Summer Season Busy in Franconia

Franconia doesn't get much local news coverage so here is what has been happening this summer to some local landmarks.

- Abbie Greenleaf Library - restored front brick facade and restored original mosaic tile floor
- Besaw Interpretive Center - remade two information signs and painted two sides of building
- Community Church of Christ - adding addition to make building handicap accessible and increase office space
- Dow Clock - cleaned clock mechanism; clock hands and tower repair underway
- Franconia Safety Services Building - demolished old building; new building construction underway
- Gasoline Station - demolished existing building; installation of new storage tanks, pumps and canopy underway
- Stone Stack - structure being stabilized and missing stones replaced
- Town Building - constructed new front steps



Top of Stone Stack

September 7, 2013



September 17, 2014

Final Farewell to Jewell

Jewell Friedman, 87, passed away on July 12, 2014, after being critically injured on June 21st when hit by a pick-up truck while out walking her Samoyed dog Selena in Saco, ME. She and her late husband Don had moved to a retirement community in Saco four year ago; Don died this past February.

Jewell was curator of the Franconia Heritage Museum for about 10 years, retiring in March 2007. The shed exhibit room is aptly named in her honor as she led the way creating interesting and timely exhibits, often several in one year. Jewell did lots of local research on the Brooks family and was in the process of writing a historical novel based on the several generations that lived in Franconia. Another passion of hers was the iron industry and the old stone stack; she led a crusade for its preservation and was happy to learn last winter that it was finally getting attention. R.I.P. Jewell, thanks for your years of devotion to the history of Franconia and the museum.



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Time to renew your membership for the year October 2014 to October 2015.
Please show your support by returning the enclosed remittance envelope. Thank you.

Franconia Buildings on the National Register

Franconia has four buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. To qualify, these properties must have significance to the history of their community, state, or the nation.



Abbie Greenleaf Library — Built in 1914 for the town by Col. Charles H. Greenleaf, proprietor of the Profile House; rare New Hampshire example of Jacobethan Revival style architecture. Added to register in 2003.



Dow Academy — Georgian Revival wooden building built in 1903 to replace first Dow building which burned in 1902; center of school & town social activities until 1958; currently private condominiums. Added to register 1982.



Frost Place — Two-story frame house built about 1856; home of Robert Frost from 1915 to 1920 during which period he wrote many of his famous poems; now a museum and poetry center. Added to register in 1976.



Lovett's Inn — Originally two cape style structures built about 1820; property served as working farm until 1928 when converted to an inn by Charles J. Lovett, Sr.; still an inn representing evolution of historical development in the North Country. Added to register in 1982.