



# Hollis Historical Society

## Newsletter for January-February, 2012

### The Farley Building

by Jeanne Smith-Cripps

The Farley building, built in 1877, was recently placed on the National Historic Registry and selected by the Seven to Save program of the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance. This historic building is recommended for preservation as an example of rural Victorian architecture in a civic building. Located in the Historic District of town, it functioned as a



Mary Farley

school for 127 years. In 2005, the building was vacated. The town of Hollis is now trying to determine the future of the building. The debate in Hollis is whether the Farley building should be retained for new community uses or demolished.

The history of the Farley building began in 1874 as the town considered the consolidation of their school district's fourteen grammar

schools to save money that might defray the expense of a high school. Building a high school was thought to be a benefit to the town by providing a local high school education, raising educational standards and increasing property values. The town voted to buy land in the center of town and to build a new two-story school. The following year, Miss Mary Farley died and willed \$10,000 to the town with the stipulation that a high school be built within two years of her death.

In 1877, the town of Hollis built a high school with the bequest of Mary Farley. The school was located on Main Street set back from the road on a long curved driveway lined with elm trees. The



Original Building

original building was constructed in the Italianate or American Bracketed style of architecture. It originally had a symmetrical facade two and a half stories high, clapboard siding, corner pilasters, wide cornices supported by pairs of decorative brackets, six over six double hung windows capped with pediments, and louvered shutters. Large windows provided ample light for classrooms, and a single-story porch with ornate brackets at the top of its support posts sheltered the two front doors. The symmetrical look continued with three windows on the second floor, and two on the third all shuttered. The roof was crowned by a two-staged cupola with a flared roof and an elaborate metal crest and finials.

The centrally located high school building housed the majority of the 267 students in grades one through twelve. A grammar school remained in the eastern part of town. The High School District occupied the

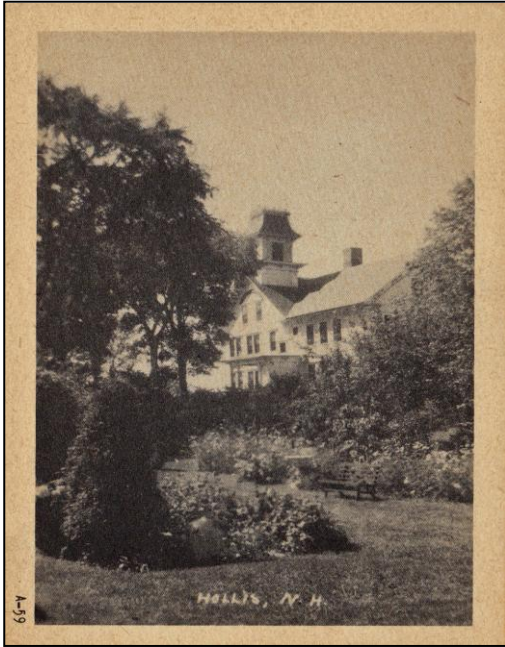


1904 building

second floor of the new building. The Central District, School District No. 1, grades one through eight, used the first floor. The third floor was leased to the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization founded in England in the eighteenth century. The Odd Fellows agreed to finish the third floor interior and in exchange they were allowed to occupy the space as long as they desired. Their large arched "Odd Fellows" sign adorned the front gable peak until 1974.

The first notable change to the building was the 1904 addition. The addition was built on the north side of the school using a cross gable design. A third-floor dormer was added on the south side roof. The front doors were relocated and the front porch extended. The old District 8

schoolhouse was moved from the North end of town and attached to the rear of the building.



**1921 Building**

By 1920, crowded conditions created a poor learning environment in the elementary grades. In 1921 Hollis approved a two and a half story addition to the existing building. Four large rooms were built on the North side of the building for grades five, six, seven and eight, a high school science lab and a girl's lunchroom. The project included internal improvements to heating, lighting, ventilation and sanitary facilities. Some classrooms were divided to allow the number of grades per classroom reduced from three to two.

The school population by the 1940s increased due to the postwar "baby boom" and new homes that attracted new and younger families. More classrooms were needed to accommodate the growing population. Also, state aid to schools required communities to meet the regulations set by the New Hampshire State Board of Education. The State Board believed that a town the size of Hollis could not provide a good education for high school students. Hollis resolved the dual problems by building an elementary school for grades one through six in 1952. Students in grades seven through twelve remained in the existing high school building. The high school curriculum was enhanced with the addition of technical and college preparatory courses to satisfy New Hampshire State Board regulations. Hollis outgrew the high school building in ten years and a new high school was built on adjacent property in 1962. For the next

forty years, the Farley Building was used for art, language, and special education classes. The building footprint remained the same, however, the original aesthetics were modified for practical considerations. Many of the large windows were either boarded over or replaced with smaller more energy efficient sash units. The classic tower was damaged by lightning in 1958 and later removed. The bell in the bell tower was given away. Although the building underwent many interior changes that met new and developing educational standards, some original details remained. The character of the original 1877 building is evident in pressed patterned tin ceilings and walls, wainscoting, and slate blackboards.

The Farley building was used for high school classes until 2005. The old school that served seven generations of Hollis school children was closed and ownership of the building transferred to the town. Debate as to the fate of the building continues. A committee was formed to investigate and determine the viable options for the disposition of the historic Farley building. The committee was composed of representatives from the Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission, Budget Committee, Board of Selectmen, DPW Director, and community volunteers. The committee identified these options: renovate or restore, mothball for future renovation, replace, or demolish. Preserving the building would require a substantial financial investment and community commitment to raise funds in support of the project. Suggestions for future uses include town offices, Town Clerk's office, Hollis Seniors, Hollis Historical Society, and arts groups. The Town of Hollis will be asked to vote on a petition article to raise and appropriate an amount of money to stabilize and preserve the Farley Building to ensure that it remains in stable condition for its eventual preservation, rehabilitation or restoration in a few weeks at the annual Town Meeting.



**Current Farley Building**

## Message to the Members

Once again, I want to express my sincere thanks on behalf of the Board members for your continued financial support and participation in our programs this year. Your continued involvement keeps us going each year, and we appreciate the chance to connect with all of you at the program presentations. Our March 22, 2012, the program is entitled "Remembrances of Foreign Wars," and it will feature a panel of Hollis veterans, chaired by Jim Belanger, who will share their recollections of World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam wars. This program will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in March. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, we will offer "A Taste of Hollis," presented by Liz Barbour, founder of The Creative Feast. Liz will provide us with a cooking demonstration and tasting opportunity, using recipes from old Hollis cookbooks. Our annual meeting and potluck dinner will take place on Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will be at 7pm and our program will begin at 8pm. Bruce Hardy, our program chair, will offer a presentation on "Tools and Construction Techniques Used in Cooperage." He will be discussing the types of cooperage common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and demonstrating the tools and techniques used for constructing a barrel.

We were very pleased that our September Strollin' and Rollin' event was a success. It gave Hollis residents and visitors from Freedom's Way communities an opportunity to view the rich history and culture of our town. The collaboration of our Society with the Beaver Brook Association, the Hollis Heritage Commission, the Hollis Land Protection Study Committee, and the Souhegan Valley Chamber of Commerce in planning this event promises to benefit our town with future jointly sponsored activities. The planning committee for the Strollin' and Rollin' event was awarded the Crystal Eagle Award by the Freedom's Way Heritage Association at its annual meeting last fall. In addition, Bette Finner was presented with the Freedom's Way President's Award for her work in designing the Hollis Strollin' and Rollin' guidebook that was given to participants to assist them in their tour. Copies of this guidebook are available for purchase at the Wheeler House and the Always Ready Engine House. In preparation for the tour, we were able to complete significant improvements to the Ice House behind the Wheeler House. Sharon Howe opened the Pine Hill School that she has restored in time for public viewing as part of the tour, and visitors were able to view the Gould House in the lost village of Monson. The Heritage Commission offered a poster display of Hollis mill sites, barns, and historic homes at the Lawrence Barn.

We are very pleased to report that our major project for this spring will be the installation of a permanent Veteran's Wall exhibit on the second floor of the Engine House. This exhibit will be displayed on the upstairs wall facing "The Block," and it will consist of framed lists of Hollis residents who served in each of this country's wars. This project is being planned jointly with the Donald C. Petry VFW Post with the assistance of Lou Tyska and Martha Davis, our Exhibits chair. In front of the exhibit wall, we plan to have a table to display some of our military accessions, such as pictures of servicemen, equipment and uniforms. We are planning a dedication the end of May. We hope that you will take the opportunity to visit this special exhibit.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our next Hollis Historical Society program in March.

*Dick Sales*, President

### Mission Statement for Accessions

We appreciate, so very much, each and every accession that is given to our Historical Society. Without the support of our members and friends, our collection would not continue to grow. Since it is sometimes misunderstood, we wanted to explain our policy relating to accepting an item into our collection:

- 1. The item must have been made and/or used in Hollis, or be associated with a person, place, or event in the town; or to a limited extent, is typical or representative of objects made or used in Hollis; and that is historical, cultural, or aesthetic in nature***
- 2. If the item is a duplication of something we already have in our collections, we might not be able to accept it***
- 3. We need to determine if the item is something we can properly care for***

Space is always a problem, and the cost of archival materials is substantial. For these reasons, we have to be careful in our acceptance process. We are always happy to discuss with you any item you might be considering donating to the Hollis Historical Society. Please feel free to stop by and visit us any Monday or Wednesday from 1pm to 4pm. Or phone anytime (603)465-3935.

## Books Available for Sale

- \*\*\*Newly republished: "Hollis Seventy Years Ago" by Henry Gilman Little \$20
- "Early Settlers of West Dunstable, Monson, and Hollis, NH" by Charles S. Spaulding \$35
- "Hollis Family Album 1730 – 1950" by Joan C. Tinklepaugh. A new history of Hollis told through the stories of the families who lived it \$50
- "History of Hollis, NH 1730 – 1879" by Samuel T. Worcester \$45
- "Where the Past Has Been Preserved, Hollis, NH 1879 – 1979," Irene West, editor \$30
- "Hollis Marriages & Births up to 1900," Joan C. Tinklepaugh \$20
- "Peter Powers, Pioneer" by Rudge Nichols and Caroline Poole (this book benefits the Hollis Social Library) \$10

Books are available at the Hollis Historical Society, Hollis Social Library, and the Hollis Town Clerk's Office during their regular hours.

Mail orders accepted when accompanied by a check in the amount of order plus \$4.00 per book S&H, payable to the Hollis Historical Society, P.O. Box 754, Hollis, NH 03049. Call **603-465-3935** or go to [www.hollis-history.org](http://www.hollis-history.org)



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