

RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TOWN MUSEUM

Covid-19 Statement

Until further notice, the museum will be open by appointment only, limited to 2 visitors per appointment. Masks are required inside, as is hand sanitizing upon entering the building.

Make your appointment online, email us at info@ryenhistoricalociety.org, or call 603-436-9278

Schedule Museum Visit

THE RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS AN INDEPENDENT, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO COLLECTING AND PRESERVING THE RICH HISTORY OF RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE BY ENGAGING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS THROUGH OUR MUSEUM AND PROGRAMS

RHS WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

I am pleased to announce the Rye Historical society board of directors for 2022:

Ginna Macdonald, President

Jan Olmstead, Vice President

Steve Cash, Treasurer

Lew Karabatsos, Secretary

Jean Briggs Badger

Alex Herlihy, Museum Director

Becky Marden

Andy Stecher

James Tegeder

Debbi Toohey

New board members are Jan Olmstead, Jean Briggs Badger, and Andy Stecher. Each of these members brings unique knowledge and experience that will help us fulfill our mission of *“collecting and preserving the rich history of Rye, NH by engaging residents and visitors through our museum and programs.”* Upcoming newsletters will highlight each of these individuals so our members can get to know them better.

Interested in possibly serving on the board? We have room to expand and appreciate people to help with marketing, technology, legal expertise, collections management, program development, facilities maintenance, and finance. If interested, please reach out to us at info@RyeNHHistoricalSociety.org, or leave a voicemail at (603) 436-9278.

Ginna Macdonald

TOWN REPORTS

A Political History of our Town

All communities create an annual written document of the work of town government and its citizens. The town museum has Rye town reports from 1863 to the present and a few scattered earlier ones. In the 1800s there were no narrative reports, only statistics, but they still yield much information about the public life of the town. The only written report was that of the town school superintendent. In the late 1860s and beyond, he berated the unwillingness of “cheap” taxpayers to fund an upgrade of the decrepit East School. With no fear of litigation in those days, he wrote that the town would soon have a graveyard for the students and teacher who would all freeze to death if action was not taken. In the 1870s some repairs were finally made, but it took Rye resident Professor Parsons of the Univ. of Penn., to privately fund the construction of the new East School in 1896 using local beach stones.

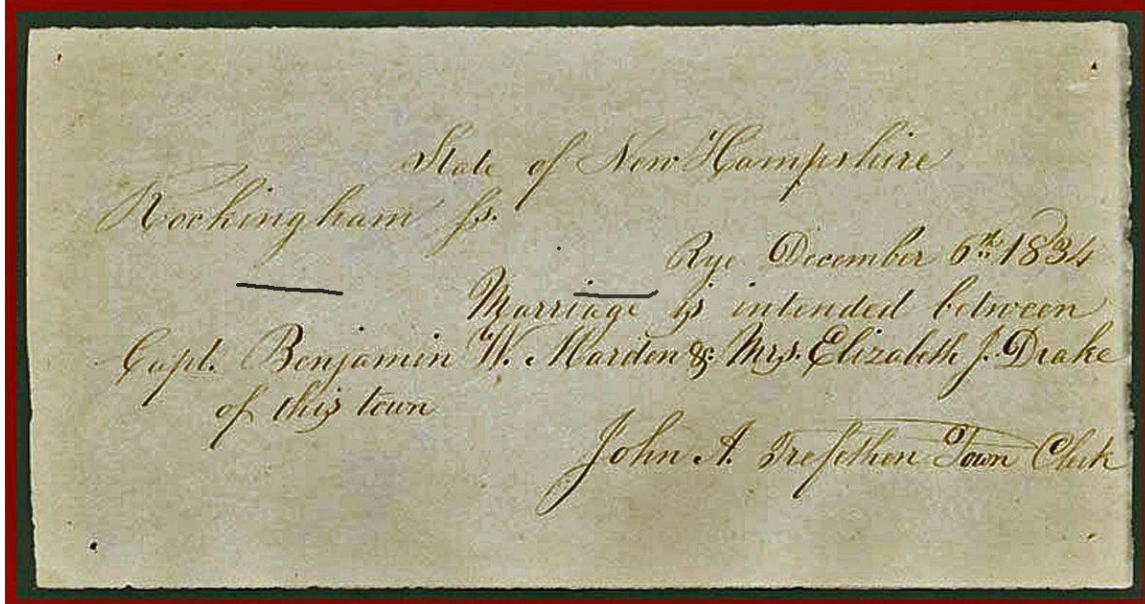


Early town reports include information on taxes collected, money borrowed from residents to pay town bills in anticipation of taxes, road and bridge repair, insect control, support of “tramps,” school statistics, warrant articles voted up or down, births, marriages, deaths, etc. In 1886, school superintendent Oren Green wrote a glowing report on Clara, the teacher at West School on Washington Road. He had fallen in love with her and they were married two years later. Two of their sons, Harry and Charlie Green, would become well known characters in the next century and leave their mark on the town.

Starting in the 20th century, heads of departments and boards began writing narrative reports along with statistics to give a fuller picture of the town’s political life. By the end of the century, the town report included much more detailed accounts, especially of warrant articles discussed at town meeting and later the deliberative session, as well as the results of the vote in town election. The town report has appeared in various shapes and sizes, but in this century has settled into the format we are used to. For the first two decades of this century, Priscilla Jenness did a wonderful job of illustrating the town report with historic photos, information and anecdotes. RHS hopes to help bring that feature back to the town report in 2023.

Many are not aware that the Rye Public Library served as a repository of all printed historical items related to Rye before we had a museum. In fact, in the new addition of 1997, a New Hampshire room was created with a large oval conference table and all that material about Rye and beyond is located there. On the town website town reports are accessible from 2007, but all the reports are digitized by UNH: https://scholars.unh.edu/rye_nh_reports/57/ For those who prefer the paper version, all town reports maybe found in the library’s NH Room.

Alex Herlihy



AN 1834 INTENT TO MARRY AGAIN

Years ago a batch of old "Intent to Marry" records from Rye appeared on eBay. Above is a screengrab of one: On December 6, 1834, Captain Benjamin W. Marden and Elizabeth J. Drake declared their intent to marry.

And marry they did, on December 28th. It was the second marriage for both. In 1821 Benjamin had wed Hannah Lang, who died six years later. Elizabeth (born Eliza Garland) had married Jonathan Drake, who lived at the corner of Washington and Central Roads in the house built by Simon Goss and ran the store Goss had set up in the basement. In January 1833 Jonathan was killed by falling from his horse.

Benjamin and Eliza were in their early 30s when they wed. Both had produced children with their previous spouses; together they produced four more. Benjamin, a shoemaker by trade, briefly served (1848/49) as Rye's postmaster. He also maintained a small library.

Eliza died in 1861. Two years later Benjamin took yet another wife, thirty-year-old Hannah Locke. He died in 1882. Hannah lived on into the 20th century.

Jim Macdonald

Where is This?

[Click here or on the picture if you know!](#) Answer will be in next month's newsletter.



First person to reply correctly will be mentioned in next month's newsletter.

No January Winner

No one correctly identified the Washington House, an 1850s hotel that once stood at the corner of Cable and Old Rock Roads. Around the turn of the 20th century, the hotel was converted to an apartment house offering summer rentals. Washington House burned down in 1926.



THIS MONTH IN RYE HISTORY

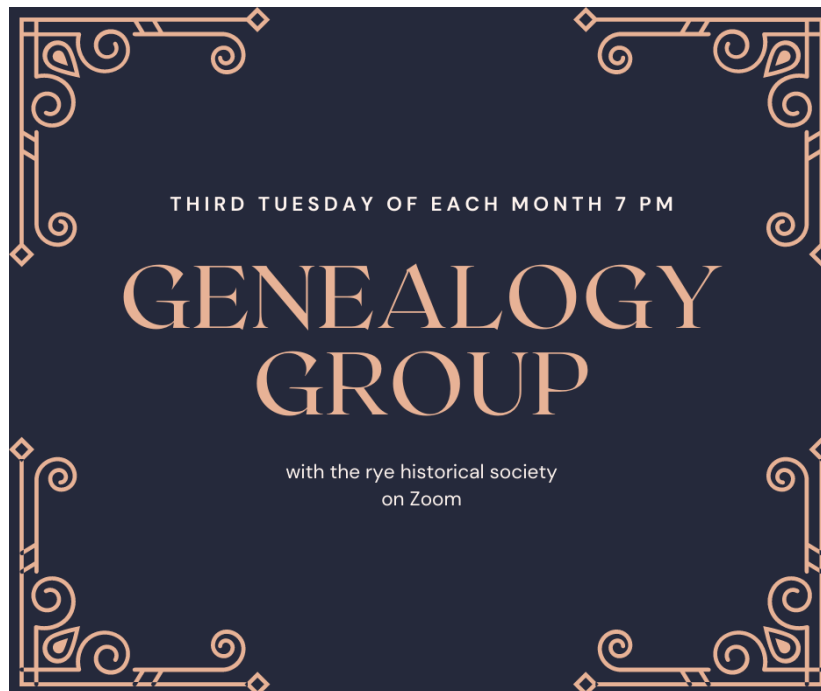
February 1893: Church gets clock

On February 14, 1893, the Congregational Church installed the first and only

tower clock in Rye. The new clock can be seen in this 1900 photo:



Join the the Genealogy Group's meeting on Zoom
Tuesday, March 13, at 7:30 PM





Audio tour

Rye Beach Block

★★★★★ [4 reviews](#) | [Rye](#) | Free

Did you know there is a guided walking tour in Rye Beach? [Download the IziTRAVEL app and get started!](#)

Don't want to walk? You can take this tour from the comfort of your easy chair!

Support Rye Historical Society by doing your shopping on Amazon Smile!



Ye Olde Gift Shoppe

New Items:

REVISED: Remember When We... Wallis Sands Beach Revisited by Deb Cross

Rye Historical Society logo
Campfire Mugs

Rye NH 1623 Winter Hats



Shipping and local pick up available.

Local orders can be picked up or delivered free of charge upon request.

Shop Now



RHS is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization

Rye Historical Society

603-436-9278

info@ryenhhistoricalsociety.org

10 Olde Parish Road, Rye, NH 03870

[Click here to be added to our email list](#)

Are you on Instagram? Facebook? Twitter? YouTube?

RHS is!

Follow RHS on Social Media

Click the Icons below

