

# Island Pond Historical Society Inc. Newsletter



Preserving Traditions  
of the Past

Fall  
2015

## President's Message:

Dear Readers:

I would like to thank the members for their support and look forward to working with the officers and members to preserve and share our history of Island Pond. I also want to wish former President Linda Bresette and husband Mike who sold their home in Island Pond the best and hope they will visit us often.

Fifty-nine members and four guest attended our 48th anniversary meeting on August 2, 2015. Our guest speaker, Professor Emeritus and Adjutant of Sociology at Bentley University, Chris Dale gave an excellent talk on the history of Island Pond from the 1600s to 1930 which all enjoyed. Professor Chris Dale has just finished writing a book on the history of Island Pond for the Island Pond Historical Society that will be available later this year. I am still planning on recruiting new members by sending out mailings to Brighton High Alumni. I also urge you to recruit others that we may not have contacted. Remember a membership makes an excellent gift. Please let us know your address changes and provide us with your new address when leaving for the winter months.

We would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions, articles for the newsletter, or memories that you would like to share of Island Pond. We also accept donated artifacts, photos, family photos and genealogies for our archives and display in the museum. We will also do our best to help you with your genealogy inquiries.

We hope that you will take time to visit the Island Pond Historical Museum which will be open on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. through September. Many of our photos and artifacts will show you what life was like in Island Pond many years ago and may even bring back some good memories.

Sincerely,

Betty Goupee Gilfillan  
President, Island Pond Historical Society

## Island Pond Historical Society Officers and Trustees

President: Betty Goupee Gilfillan  
Vice President: Craig Goulet  
Secretary: Michael Strait  
Treasurer: Virginia Wing  
Trustees: Gordon Lefebvre, Muriel O'Gorman,  
Mike Clarke  
Museum Curator: Clifford Biron.  
Newsletter Editor: Mark Biron  
President Emeritus: John Carbonneau

Location: Canadian National Railway Station, 2nd  
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Clifford Biron, Curator (802) 723-4345

The Island Pond Historical Society is dedicated to discovering, collecting, and preserving whatever relates to the history of the village of Island Pond and the town of Brighton.

The historical society museum occupies the second floor of the restored railway station. There are permanent displays of photographs, railroad memorabilia, 19th-century clothing and uniforms, lumbering tools, local newspapers, and Odd Fellows memorabilia.

Since the Island Pond Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Our Federal EIN number is 03-0147560.

**Cover Photo:** Earl Donnelly, Roy Foss, Carl Foss, Dr. Harold Kennedy and Herb Bartlett during a summer fishing expedition. IPHS archive photo. Date the photo was taken is unknown.

# Island Pond Historical Society Annual Meeting

Story and Photos by Sharon Campbell Biron

Seventy enthusiastic visitors joined with members and volunteers of the Island Pond Historical Society for their 48th annual meeting at Legion Post #80 in Brighton on Sunday, Aug. 2.

Guest Speaker, Dr. Chris Dale, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Adjutant Professor of Sociology at Bentley University, and contributing scholar at the UVM center for Research on Vermont. He treated the audience to a breakdown of his recent work, a 419 page History of Island Pond, to be published by L. Brown & Sons of Barre, Vt. later this year. The hardback book encompassing the history and development of Island Pond from the 1600s up to 1930s, was first envisioned fifteen years ago during a conversation between Dr. Dale and his late father Dr. Porter H. Dale, and John Carbonneau, president emeritus of the Island Pond historical society. Carbonneau resides in Florida with his wife Elaine.

Professor Dale's talk began with the pre-contact period and the Abenaki hunter gatherers whose migratory path traveled between Canada, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Between 1600 and 1700 the Abenaki, who were one of 89 different tribes, fought their fiercest battles with the Mohawk, and then with the

French in their battles against the English. Dale described how contact with disease-affected Europeans killed thousands of Abenaki, far more than perished through warfare. After treating the audience to a powerpoint presentation on the granting of 'Gilead' (as Island Pond was known in 1780) to Elihu Marwin for the grand sum of four English pounds and ten shillings, Dale surprised the audience with the hitherto unknown fact that one of the area's earliest land owners, Cyprian Sterry, a trader of Providence, Rhode Island, was instrumental in the evil practice of slave trading. From just 17 sea voyages that were financed by Cyprian Sterry 1,543 men women and children

*Below: Pat Carbonneau announced that she was present at the first historical society meeting forty-eight years ago.*





*Betty Gilfillan, Virginia Wing, Muriel O'Gorman and Craig Goulet welcome guests and members to the annual meeting Aug.2.*

the development of logging and lumber yards, plus the construction of hotels, stores, libraries, and schools, and attracting fresh blood in the form of workers from Ireland, France, Scotland and Canada.

Dale then described how the men and women of Island Pond began flocking to other towns and states, lured away either by adverts for cheap land or good wages in the textile mills, and

were sold into a life of misery and captivity in America, earning Cyprian Sterry a fortune.

Other aspects of Dale's fascinating talk covered early boundary maps of Island Pond - revealing that much of the village had previously been in Wenlock, once a tiny hamlet of just 26 people. Historical documents containing the names of first settlers, such as Ezra Carter, were also shown while another topic covered by Dale was the momentous event that took place on August 5, 1851, when the cash strapped Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad sold out to the Canadian National Railroad and, in doing so, changed the course of history because the sale ensured that the railroad traveled not through Colebrook and Canaan, as originally planned, but through North Stratford and Island Pond, turning the town into a center of prosperity by bringing employment to hundreds, as well as necessitating a train station and customs house, and supporting

by dreams of riches to be made in the California gold rush. Others left this area for far away states such as Ohio and Utah where they helped establish the Mormon church. Many other locals fought in the civil war, the Mexican revolution, and as far away as China in the Fall of Peking or during WWI and WWII.



Among the audience were a diverse range of age groups. The many guests included Bill Smith and his son and his grandson Nathaniel, Peter Dale, Susan Dale Kenyon, Tim Dale, former Society president Clifford Biron, Newsletter Editor and former Society president Mark Biron and his wife Sharon Campbell Biron, a local author and TV producer. Rene Roy, Stanton Johnson, state representative Paul Lefebvre, Vincent Illuzi, Mr. and Mrs. Hill, Susan Vera, Alan and Virginia Wing, Mac and Cynthia McDonald, Bradley Reynolds, Frank Allard, Pat Carbonneau, Muriel O’Gorman, Mike Bresette, Gordon and Rebecca Tracy Lefebvre, IPHS secretary Michael Strait, Legion Post Commander Jim Worth, and Mike and Jan Seguin Clarke whose antique 150 year old “Guest Register of Island Pond House” was the star of the show.

Visitors lined up to be photographed next to the heavy leather bound Register and read the copper plate signatures of early notables who stayed at the hotel such as Thomas Holt, a famous designer of Italianate church steeples, and G.W. Noyes who compiled the notes of his ancestor John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneida Community. Among the many notable guests who stayed at the Island Pond House in 1865 were Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his wife and family. The registrar is signed on behalf of General Grant by his military secretary. At a time when fires were rife and fire fighting services were in short supply, many other hotels such as the Green Mountain and the Vermont House burned down. The Island Pond House however survived well into the 20th century and became a popular venue.

Other exhibits enjoyed by the appreciative audience included an antique map dating back to 1878 that was donated by Professor Chris Dale and his sister Susan Dale, a camera donated by Lawrence Dale of Colorado, a collection of year book photos from St Mary’s Convent, rare photographs from the Mike Clarke collection, and a 1970’s mirrored Disco Ball from the now demolished Grand View on East Brighton

Road that was donated to the Island Pond Historical Society by Mark & Jackie Vaillancourt.

Closing business of the meeting saw the Island Pond Historical Society’s Vice President Mr. Craig Goulet, proprietor of the Brighton Garage, present a crystal clock in a blue silk lined case to the outgoing president Linda Leavens Bresette as thanks for her service from 2011-2015, there was the annual Officers’ and Progress report by treasurer Virginia Wing, and the draw of three door prizes including an artfully decorated large slate pizza board by painter Mrs. Rebecca Tracy Lefebvre, a gallon of Whitehill’s Maple Syrup purchased from the Kingdom Supermarket, and a \$25 coupon purchased from the The Hearth & Home Country Store. The meeting ended with a vote on membership dues and the election of new officers. A warm welcome was extended to the incoming president, Mrs. Betty Goupee Gilfillan of Island Pond, who thanked Professor Chris Dale for his excellent presentation. Before departing, guests and members enjoyed a buffet of fresh fruit, assorted sandwiches, cookies, cakes, hot drinks and iced water especially prepared for the occasion by caterer Amanda Phillabaum and her daughter.



# At Island Pond 93 Years Ago

By George N. Dale  
1958

The only record of a U. S. President at Island Pond shows U. S. Grant was here on Saturday, August 5, 1865. This is the one stop he made in Vermont on his railroad journey to Quebec, Canada.

Many Presidents have seen Vermont since Adams and Jefferson came together in Bennington in 1791. But the nearest approach of another President to Island Pond was the gala appearance of Theodore Roosevelt at the Barton Fair in 1912.

Several Presidents lived in Vermont, like the two native sons, Arthur and Coolidge. In 1851 Garfield succeeded Arthur as teacher in the same Vermont school house at Pomfret. Thirty years later Arthur succeeded Garfield in the White House to establish the only record of two Presidents trading jobs twice.

More than once Taft returned to the land of his Green Mountain ancestors, notably in 1912 at Montpelier where an Island Pond native, Porter Dale, presided at the ceremony in the Capitol.

The Garfield- Arthur trades are no less a coincidence than two other Presidents going from Vermont to assume office. Theodore Roosevelt hurried from Isle La Motte, Vermont to succeed McKinley at Buffalo on September 14, 1901. Calvin Coolidge remained at his birthplace to take the farmstead oath as Harding's successor on August 3, 1923 with Island Pond's Porter Dale as witness.

When General Grant arrived at Island Pond by special train at noon in the summer of 1865, he was escorted to the resplendent Island Pond House for dinner with his traveling staff and friends. There each Island Pond soldier was greeted with a hand-clasp by his General.

That was a radiant climax for local veterans only four months after Appomattox. Lincoln was less than four months gone with all the remaining laurels on Grant. Hence it was more impressive than would have been in 1919 visit by Pershing or a reunion here with Eisenhower.

Many places are labeled "Washington slept

here." A sign over Hill's Garage should proclaim "General Grant Stopped Here". That garage is precisely where the old Island Pond House stood from 1853 to 1905.

Here is the story as recited in the weekly (now daily) Newport Express on Wednesday, August 16, 1865:

"General Grant at Island Pond.

"The following communication was received too late for publication last week:

"Mr. Editor: Gen. U. S. Grant, his family and a part of his staff, with a few friends passed over the Grand Trunk Railroad by special train on their way to Quebec, on Saturday last arriving at Island Pond at 12 o'clock. The engine was gaily decorated with flags. The General was the first to step out of the cars when he was met by H. Bailey Esq. of Portland, Maine escorting Mrs. Grant. General Natt Head of New Hampshire was among the party. The Depot had a large National flag on its flag staff and the passage to the Hotel was beautifully arranged with evergreen and festooned with U.S. flags and showing in large letters "Welcome the Hero." Within the hotel there seemed to be a general profusion of evergreen wreaths and festoons, interspersed with flags and mottoes, which were very neat, timely, and significant. "Peace to all mankind," was the main entrance to the hall.

"On arriving at the hotel the General was introduced to many of our citizens, after which the party repaired to the dining hall where a sumptuous dinner awaited them (and just such as Waterhouse knows how to get up.)

"The hall was completely encircled and draped with U. S. flags, externs with evergreens wreaths; at the head of the hall, "Victory, Union Forever" was seen in large letters, while on the other end the American eagle stood perched with outspread wings while underneath, "Grant's Summer Line" stood out in bold relief.

"After dinner he was presented to all our returned soldiers in a body; each of whom he took by the hand and during his stay there seemed to be a General shaking of hands with everyone.

"The day will long be remembered by all but more especially by the children, who, coming

up timidly to shake hands with the greatest of American Generals, fearing to extend theirs yet he would anticipate their fears and wishes, reach and take their little hands so pleasantly and low for others to come that they were completely captivated with the great and yet unassuming man.”

When Grant arrived in 1865 Island Pond had an English-style depot covering all the tracks from Main Street to South Street, destroyed by fire in 1873. That sprawling monolith had two passenger platforms with separate east and west baggage rooms. Beneath its high cupola were all railroad offices and large waiting room plus the local post office.

In true English fashion trains passed on the left. Beside the lake were the tracks to Canada. Near the hall were the rails to Portland, Maine. Between the two passenger platforms a central stairway went up to the covered walk leading direct to the Island Pond House owned by the railroad and leased to the popular G. Waterhouse. Below was the highway curved about the east end of the depot from today's Freight Shed to South Street.

Grant's special train stopped about where the turn in the overpass that was erected forty years later. At that point he climbed the steps with his ceremonious convoy and walked a few paces to the 80 room hotel for the festive welcome in the 300 guest dining room. On his right was where the Stewart House later appeared, it was the smaller Vermont House that burned in 1866, while farther to the right was the new Brighton House with James O'Keefe as proprietor. Those were the three hotels in a straight line facing the grand depot three years before the Clyde River was bridged in 1866 by a new flour mill that eventually became the Osborne Hotel.

Among the few prominent landmarks Grant observed that now remain are the Congregational Church (St. James the Greater Catholic church) now owned by Louis Lavoie, the first official residence of the local railway superintendent now the Glendon Paradis homestead, the 1864 superintendent's home now the Stoessel Norcross residence, plus a few Main Street buildings like the two Joseph's Blocks later renovated to entirely

change their appearance and several homes like those now occupied by Doctor William McBride and Alphonse Lefebvre.

As Grant left the hotel he faced the incomparable island that ever will be the emerald of Island Pond. Likewise he saw the giant mill chimney that towered 115 feet above the village from 1859 to 1914 near the present home of Fred Tanguay. Probably he best remembered the warm welcome of local war heroes who soon helped make him President. But his farewell view of Brighton as he rounded Bluff Mountain had to be the pioneer acreage of John Cargill who must have hailed the flag decked train from his homestead.

*This 1868 print below shows President Ulysses S. Grant posed on a horse with his family, one son is seated on a horse and wearing a military uniform, a daughter is seated on a pony, and his wife and two sons are standing on the left with a dog outside of the White House, with the U.S. Capitol in the background. Print is from the Library of Congress website.*



# August 5th, 2015 150th anniversary of Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Visit to Island Pond

By Mike and Jan Clarke

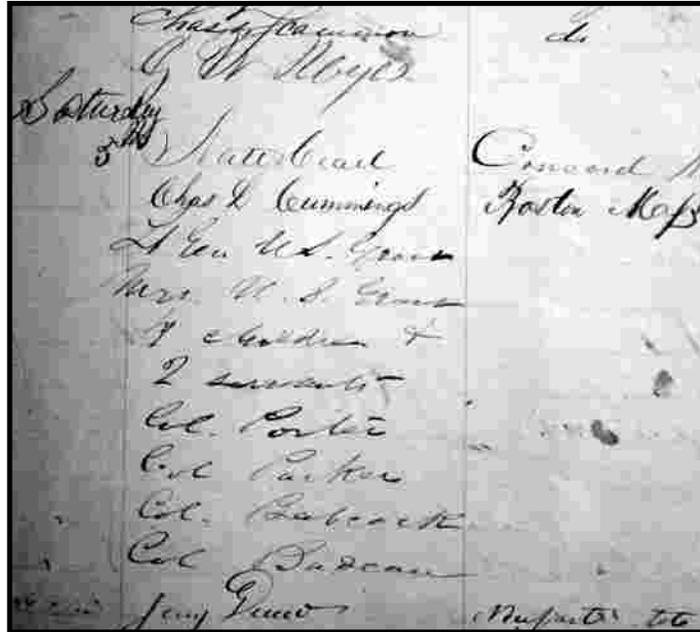
August 5th, 2015 will mark the 150th anniversary of Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's visit to Island Pond, boarding at the (former) Island Pond House, which was located on South St., where Pepins' Garage now stands.

A couple of years ago, Craig Goulet purchased a registry of the original Island Pond House hotel, containing entries during the years 1864-1865. As my son (Shane) had recently renamed his inn The Island Pond House (Lodging) - (formerly The Avalon), in honor of the first Island Pond House (hotel), I was interested in purchasing the log book from Craig, and he kindly sold it to me. In turn, I presented it to Shane to have on display at his new business. As Shane had heard a rumor that Grant had once visited Island Pond, he used the internet to research any documentation to the story. From one (or more) newspaper articles from Aug., 1865, he discovered that Grant not only visited Island Pond, but stayed at the original Island Pond House hotel. And not only did he, his wife, their 4 children, 2 servants, and 4 colonels stay at the I.P.H. hotel, but after Shane found the exact date they had stayed here, he found their names recorded in his registry book!

The recordings:  
Lt. Gen. U.S. Grant  
Mrs. Julia Grant, Frederick Grant, Jr.  
Ellen W. Grant, Jesse R. Grant  
2 servants  
Col. Hiram Porter  
Col. E.L. Parker  
Col. O. E. Babcock  
Col. Adam Badeau; Military Secretary  
We believe that one of the colonels may have

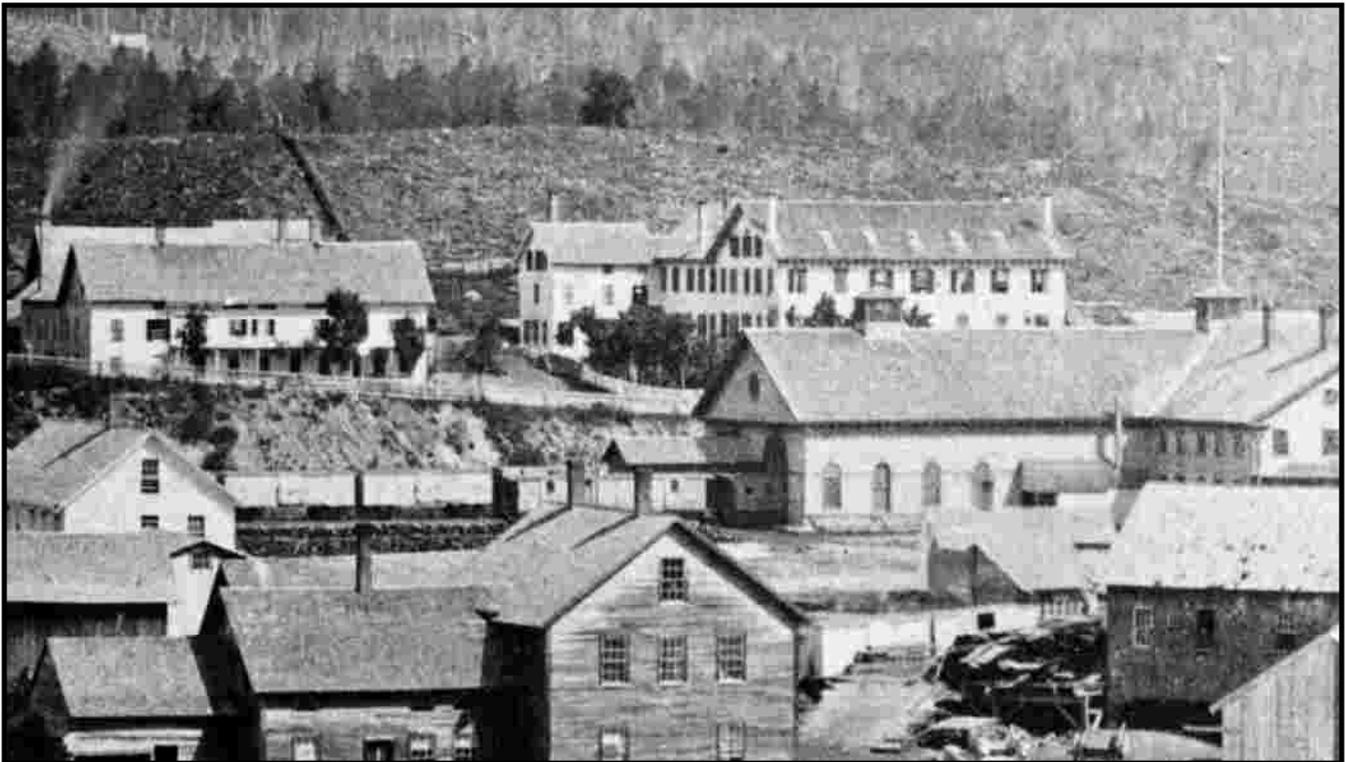
signed the entries, as the penmanship appeared the same for the entire group.

Being an antiques dealer and collector of local memorabilia for 40 years, I always tell people that you need provenance to authenticate such things. Having the 1864-65 registry for the original Island Pond House, as well as the newspaper article(s) that Shane found on the internet takes the hearsay away.



*Below Mike Clarke points out the names of the General Ulysses S. Grant party in the Island Pond House 1864-65 registry. Photo by Sharon Biron.*





*The Island Pond House (top right above RR station) was built in 1853 and burned in 1905. As described by George N. Dale in 1958...The railroad station had an "English-style depot covering all the tracks from Main Street to South Street, destroyed by fire in 1873. That sprawling monolith had two passenger platforms with separate east and west baggage rooms. Beneath its high cupola were all railroad offices and large waiting room plus the local post office." This photo taken in the 1860s is from the IPHS archives.*

## **The Island Pond House**

By Betty Gilfillan

Information from The Essex County Herald and  
The Orleans County Monitor

The Island Pond House was built in 1853 when the Grand Trunk Railroad came. G. G. Waterhouse was the proprietor. He and worker, Bridget Quinn, greeted the traveling public as they visited Island Pond. G.G. Waterhouse, a veteran stage driver, and the first conductor on the Grand Trunk died at the Island Pond House in 1873.

In 1875 Stone and Bartlett became the proprietors. In 1878 Island Pond House and the Stewart House were connected by bath and billiard rooms and was connected to the Depot by a covered walk. All trains coming from Portland, Maine and going to Montreal, stopped here for

one hour for meals. Visitors could arrange for board by the week. A first class livery in connection with the house was offered. S. Wheeler having leased the barn of the Island Pond House, was prepared to let good teams with or without drivers at reasonable rates and to put up, bait, and care for teams under his care. A Tonsor Artist, W.W. Cheney who cut children's hair and honed razors as a specialty and used bay rum for every customer located his business at the Island Pond House.

June 13, 1879. The Island Pond House which was connected to the Stewart House opened for accommodation of guests with D. Stone as manager.

In 1879 P. Hinman and Mansur are the proprietors.

January 15, 1880. The Island Pond House was given up as a hotel and the dining room was the hall for entertainment and the rest of the



*The Island Pond House was built in 1853 and burned in 1905.  
Photo courtesy of Michael and Jan Clarke.*

building was used for tenements, for the Herald office, and by George N. Dale as a law office.

Jan 16, 1880. The Grand Trunk Railway advertised the Island Pond House for sale inviting tenders for the purchase of the building at Island Pond, Vermont. The building is conveniently situated near the railway and has a well established reputation having been kept as a hotel for the last twenty-six years. Possession can be given on April 1, 1880. Permits to view the premises can be obtained from the station Agent at Island Pond. Tenders stating prices offered and terms of payment addressed to the undersigned at Montreal, Province of Quebec will be received up to Jan 30, 1880. Joseph Hickson, General Manager, Montreal Jan 6, 1880.

Jan 23, 1880. A notice was printed in the Essex County Herald for an auction sale of valuable hotel furniture to be sold at a public auction at the Island Pond House in Island Pond, Vermont on Tuesday January 27, 1880 at 10 o'clock in the forenoon. The entire furniture and fixtures of the

Island Pond House as follows: 1 good piano, 25 stoves and pipe, 3 billiard tables ( with fixtures), bedding and furniture contained in 80 bedrooms, consisting of 60 hair mattresses, 10 feather beds, 200 feather and curled hair pillows and bolsters, 60 carpets, all the parlor furniture of two large parlors consisting of upholstered sofas and chairs in car plush and hair cloth, black walnut, mahogany and marble top tables, 150 dining, office and cane seated chairs, one large new three ply carpet, all the mirrors and chandeliers in said hotel, 6 wardrobes, 1 safe, 1 counter, 1 show case, 2 desks, also all the dining room furniture consisting in part of 8 black walnut tables, all the table linen, all the stone china, glass and silver plated ware, cutlery, and the cooking utensils. Also for sale, one eight year old mare sound and good roader, 1 new driving harness, 1 work harness, 2 large buffalo robes, 1 single sleigh, 1 express sleigh, 1 buggy wagon, 1 express wagon, together with a long list of property too numerous to mention. The above property to be sold without

reserve to the highest bidder. Terms Cash Z. M. Mansur Agent A. H. Bonett Auctioneer Island Pond, Vermont.

November 13, 1905. The Orleans County Monitor reported that the Island Pond House burned to the ground Thursday evening. The building was one of the oldest in the town having

been built about fifty-five years ago. At one time the house was one of the most popular hotels on the line of the Grand Trunk Railroad between Portland, Maine and Montreal, Quebec, but as of late the building had been used as a tenement house. The insurance was \$1500.00. The origin of the fire is unknown.

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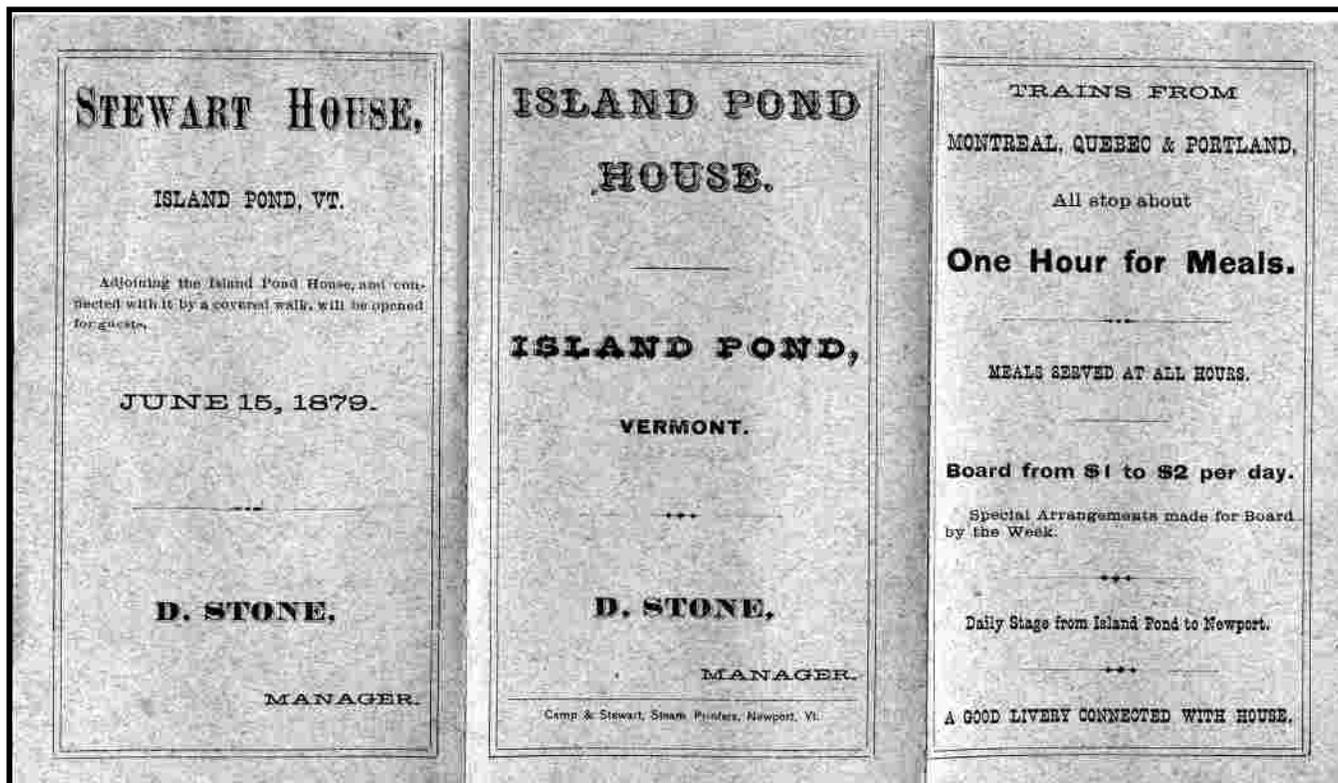
## Island Pond, Vt. What, and Where is Island Pond?

It is a small village of 1200 inhabitants, in the northeast section of Vermont, close to the boundary line. It is located on the Grand Trunk Railroad, midway between Montreal and Portland, the distance to each city being 150 miles. A point whereat all trains stop from one to two hours for meals, and the examination of passengers' baggage going in and out of Canada. Connected with all parts of the Dominion and the United States by telegraph.

The village is situated on a height of land over 1300 feet above the level of the sea, the dividing point or water shed into the Atlantic to the south and Gulf of St. Lawrence to the north, and with its noticeably pure and bracing atmosphere, the place is one of the most healthful mountain towns in New England. The country lying about is almost an unbroken wilderness, with a plentiful proportion of mountains and hills.

Mount Bluff, an eminence 1200 feet high, rises abruptly on the north of the village, and from its summit, three miles distant, a magnificent view may be obtained. The White Mountains of New Hampshire, certain parts of the Green

*The Island Pond House and the Stewart House were under the same management and published this trifold. The article above is written on the reverse of the image below.  
The copy below is courtesy of Michael and Jan Clarke.*



Mountain range, and Owls Head, rising from the side of Lake Memphremagog, in Canada, are all distinctly visible, with all intervening expanse of forest, mountain, river and lake, which once seen, can hardly fade from the memory.

The name, Island Pond, implies that there is water near by. The village is located upon the banks of a mountain lake, three and one-half miles long, and one mile wide and the view of this picturesque sheet of water, with its prominent island in the foreground, is one of the characters of the place. During the summer months a small steam Yacht plies for the convenience of pleasure parties, while small craft, from the tidy sail boat to the bark canoe, are also to be found, if desired. There are four churches in the place.

To the lover of the rod and line, Island Pond furnishes strong attractions. In the vicinity of the hotels, ranging from one to sixteen miles distant, are fifteen mountain lakes, and numerous streams, which can be reached some by train in twenty minutes, and others by an hour's drive over good roads and through the most picturesque parts of the State. All these waters abound in trout from the small pan fish to the noble three and four pounder, and so easy of access that ladies with a taste for the gentle art, can enjoy a day's trout fishing. To the lover of camp life, tramps of five and ten miles through the forest, with really good fishing at the end repay him for his exertions.

It remains to say a word as to the boarding accommodations of the place. There are two large hotels, connected by a covered walk and now under the same management. The older of these the ISLAND POND HOUSE, has been long and most favorably known to the traveling public. The house with which this is connected, the STEWART HOUSE is modern in its appointments, and but just finished and opened. This second house alone contains sixty-three sleeping apartments; it has wide and piazzas from which unsurpassed views of the surrounding country can be obtained.

Its first class hotel accommodations, beautiful drives and rides, fine boating and fishing and picturesque scenery, the advantages of two daily mails, telegraph offices, and a direct rail route,

cannot fail to render Island Pond the popular resort for the tourist, artist, business man and disciple of Walton.

## Spruce Gum

By Betty Gilfillan

When I was a youngster, my father used to cut pulpwood spruce and fir and sell it to Aubrey Bean. While doing so he often found spruce gum which he gave to my brothers and me to chew. Spruce gum is formed from pitch which exudes from the seam of a spruce tree in the summer that hardens into a clear hard crystalline fragrant lump in the fall which is cut off the tree. Not all spruce trees have spruce gum. The best spruce trees that have gum are usually found on exposed cliffs or rocky and uneven ground. Sometimes spruce gum has to be cleaned; bark, twigs, and impurities removed before it could be chewed. The clearer it is the sweeter it chews and the longer it lasts.

Years ago many woodsmen often would go deep into the woods in October through June in search of spruce gum to sell. In the summer months the gum would run together and contain impurities and its appearance would deteriorate. Spruce gum sold for a dollar a pound. A good harvest for the season was about two hundred pounds per person. Many times wives and children would clean the harvest of impurities, sort and grade it before it was sold. A long telescoping pole that could be extended with a chisel securely attached to the end was used to cut the gum off from the tree. A half pint cup was also attached to the bottom of the chisel and pole so the gum as it was cut would fall into the cup. Once the spruce gum was cut from the tree, the tree would never have enough to harvest again. The last spruce gum I had was some that Kenneth Whitehill gave me. While Carlisle and I were working on Gray's genealogy, Ken came in from working in the woods and asked me if I knew what the crystalline lumps were that he was holding. I stated yes that it was spruce gum. It was very delicious.

Bennington, Vermont was the largest handler of spruce gum in the world. Augusta, Maine sold about three thousand dollars' worth of spruce gum yearly. President Coolidge stated that Vermont had the best maple syrup and spruce gum. Spruce gum was said to aid indigestion and other stomach ailments.

Information taken from the Orleans Monitor, The United Opinion, News and Citizen, The Middlebury Register, Burlington Weekly, and Vermont Phoenix.

## An Interview with Greg Stafford

By Sharon Biron  
(aka SJ Campbell)

On July 21, 2015 Sharon interviewed Greg Stafford at the Pond's Edge Restaurant for a chapter in her yet to be published new book.

"I was born in a house where the Irving gas station is today. Back in 1938 there were three houses on the site. Joe Trump – a Frenchman, lived in the house out the back. When I was five we moved up to the O'Gorman house on Mountain Street. Nicholas Patrick O'Gorman, my grand father, was my mother Mary's father. He did snow plowing and laboring for the State. Island Pond was always a safe place for kids when I was growing up. There was never any trouble. I had a lot of friends. My father, Leon Stafford, had books on wildlife with drawings of different animal tracks. I grew up with those books and me and my friends used them when we went out hunting for deer tracks or playing in the woods.

My father served in World War II. My grandfather served in World War I. Everybody I knew in town was in the army. My twin brother Gordon was a full Corporal in the Marine Corp, and

I joined the Air Force. My father was a staff sergeant in the Engineers. First he was stationed on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, England, where all the tanks and trucks and other military vehicles were being prepared for mobilization in France and Germany. Then he was sent to France. My father could speak French. He couldn't believe the savage destruction and loss of life he found there. He couldn't believe the German people had allowed Hitler to do what he did. When he was there a French man saw my father guarding all the tanks and trucks that he and the engineers had traveled with across the English Channel and the man said to him in French: "Hitler ain't got trucks like that." When my father found out about the Death Camps he said it was 'organized insanity' and he realized you did have to fight the war.

I joined the Air Force in January 1959 and went down to San Antonio, Texas. I couldn't believe how hot it was. I was in boot camp for thirteen weeks. Every day you had to run around. We went to Albany in Georgia. The next town down was Plains, Jimmy Carter's birthplace, though I didn't know it at the time. I didn't like the prejudice and the racism of the south, you had to get used to it. Then I got my orders for Iceland. I found that country really interesting. I was

*Greg Stafford (below) July 21, 2015.*



stationed on a NATO base at Keflavik, and was assigned to Embassy duty and the motor pool where I worked on trucks.

Embassy duty meant I had to be in Class A uniform at all times, the job entailed hauling mail and booze up to the ambassador's office. When I arrived John Joseph Muccio was the Ambassador. He retired in 1960 and was replaced by Tyler Thompson. In the course of my working day I got to travel around a lot, I would go out to the different military sites, they were the listening stations and radar posts that picked up transmissions from everywhere. Being from Vermont, I always dressed up for the cold weather and every time I left the base I'd carry a big bag of rain gear with an extra shirt and pants plus my C-rations which consisted of dried food, matches, and four skinny cigarettes in a small packet.

I enjoyed Iceland and I liked looking around and exploring. I saw some amazing sights and made a lot of friends. The girls there were very pretty, some had light hair, others had very dark hair, and all of them had exotic accents like one girl I met, she was Sigurdur Sven Sorensen's daughter, but there were very strict restrictions for GIs. We couldn't just walk around town, the MPs would prevent you, but that didn't stop me making lots of friends. I was stationed in Iceland for thirteen months and really found it interesting. I learned how the houses and offices in the cities were heated by the natural hot steam geysers, and I liked talking with the people. They were a pretty smart bunch, well educated.

As for my family back home we kept in touch by mail. It wasn't like M.A.S.H, we couldn't just pick up the telephone and call our parents or girlfriends. You had to get permission first and make an appointment. Conversations were restricted. My twin brother Gordon and my parents missed me for the thirteen months I was stationed in Iceland but we sent letters and gifts back and forth.

Iceland had a very interesting culture. I often went down to the capital city Reykjavik. It was a nice place, I liked the people, I found them smart and interesting, and in the distance you could see Mount Hekla, the volcano never erupted while I was there but now and then it would start smok-

ing. In 2003 when I retired I opened a magazine and saw an advertisement for a \$1,300 trip to Iceland so I booked myself a ticket on the spur of the moment and it was one of the best trips I've ever had.

It was November 2003 when I landed at Reykjavik airport in Iceland, everything looked the same, but when I got out of the airport and reached the center of town everything had changed. The buildings were bigger and everything was more built up. Only the weather was pretty much just like I remembered it – cold, wet and windy, and with a little bit of snow, just like in Great Britain which is another island that borders the North Atlantic. I had a great time and really enjoyed myself on that trip.

After serving in Iceland, the military sent me straight to Japan for three years so my parents didn't see me for a total of four years. Japan was really interesting. I was stationed at Yokota airbase outside Tokyo and worked with the 56th Weather Recon. The Hurricane and Hunter Typhoons did food missions and I was in charge of all the trucks, cars, vehicles and ground power like generators and air compressors. I got about and saw a lot and I liked to ride the fast trains. A year before the '64 Olympics I saw many of the sports buildings being constructed.

The Japanese culture was great, people liked to practice their English on you so you got to talk with lots of people. I liked the food, the sushi was great, and they have hundreds of ways to serve rice. Then my twin brother Gordon came out to see me. He was in the Marine Corp. We saw each other a couple of times and we had more freedom of movement. We hiked up Mount Fuji and traveled to Yokohama and Yokusta near the ocean. We liked Tokyo, but the trouble was the city was too crowded. People on the trains there were all pressed right up against you. It was a nice city, but it had too many people and you were never alone.

The people there treated you nice, and when you rode the train girls would always want to talk with you. They wanted to know if I lived next door to Elvis Presley. I'd say: "Wait a minute, the United States isn't like Japan, it's a big country."

What I liked about Japan and the culture was the fact that every time I went off the base I learned a new thing and I met new people. My military service in Japan and Iceland was a real adventure and I liked the culture of those two countries.

The Staffords are a military family, all of us have been proud to serve our country. My parents were good at keeping in touch, they'd write and ask me how I was getting on in Yokota. I was kept busy in the weather outfit, checking all the schedules and dealing with the smashed up vehicles. People weren't careful. They'd get dents just driving around the base. I used to say to the sergeant in charge: "I need another fairy tale to tell the motor pool." I had to report something even though it was all nickel and dime stuff.

When bad weather hit Yokota we had to stay low. We had a couple of typhoons, there was loads of water. The danger came from all the stuff that was being blown around by the typhoon. There were no injuries, but tin roofs would get ripped off and blow around the base. That was dangerous. I remember one time how I had to drive my truck onto some tin sheets that had been flying around. I weighed the sheets down so the men could retrieve the sheets before they took someone's head off. Minutes before those tin sheets had been the roof of the hangar where the B-50 bomber weather planes were kept.

I had the greatest time during those four years. I earned \$86 a month and blew it all on beautiful women and booze. I was young and loaded with money and loved to travel. It was a good time, let's just put it that way. When my four years of service were completed I came home on a C-121 Air Force passenger plane. It touched down at Hickam Field in Hawaii. Two days later I flew on to Travis Air Force Base in California. Travis is named for Brigadier General Robert. F. Travis who died in the crash of a B-29 Super Fortress while transporting a nuclear weapon. At Travis they checked my papers and sorted out my money. Then I was discharged and given a plane ticket for New York where I spent a couple of days with my mother's sister, aunt Irene.

I also saw aunt Alice, my father's sister. Alice Stafford (Otis) is 96 years old now and still lives

in New York. I remember it was late April when I was there, and it was nice driving weather. Aunt Irene was friendly with a girl who had a car and a driving license so one of the trips we took was down to a large department store called Robert Hall because I realized that I needed civilian clothes. I spent \$80 in the store on two pairs of khaki colored trousers, two shirts, and a brown summer jacket. The salesman gave me a 50% discount on the jacket in recognition of my four years of service.

Two days later I left New York and took a bus back to Vermont. I was twenty-five years old, sun tanned, and had done a lot of growing up in the four years I'd served overseas. As the bus crossed the Vermont state line I looked out of the window and said to myself: "I survived, I made it home." The bus left me at the station in Newport. I found a phone and called my family, telling them to come and get me, and a short while later my uncle Nicholas came up for me in his Chevrolet which he probably bought from the Brighton Garage. Uncle Nicholas greeted me with a hug and brought me home. As we drove into Island Pond my very first thought was: "Town hasn't changed at all!" I recognized a few of the people on the street. Later, people would say "Where the hell you been Greg?" and I'd reply: "I just got out of the military."

But now that I was home I knew one of the first things I had to do was get a job so a bunch of us started working at Pratt Whitney in Connecticut where I got a job right off working as an inspection engineer. The pay was high, really good. I was a Zuiko inspector. One of the things I used to do was pour fluid onto parts. The fluid showed up cracks and invisible fissures under ultra violet light. I stayed there four years, then moved to the Brown Paper company mill at Berlin. By this stage my twin brother Gordon was married and living in Connecticut but I wasn't seeing anyone special, I was a shy boy with loads of money and I was enjoying my freedom. Eventually I started working on the railroad as a locomotive inspector.

I got married when I was forty. Ellen was a nice girl from Brooklyn, New York. Originally,

I'd been going out with her friend Kathryn. Our marriage lasted ten years. Ellen graduated from the State University of New York in Plattsburgh in 1975. She was employed at the Brighton Elementary School in Island Pond where she taught second grade for 33 years. Ellen was a city girl at heart while I was into camping. After our divorce she stayed on here in Island Pond. Ellen didn't live to collect her retirement check. She retired on June 20th and died on July 20th. After Ellen and I divorced I didn't want to get involved again.

I retired from the railroad in 2003. I loved my job on the trains working as a locomotive inspector. Every day I'd find out which train was in the line up, it was part of the federal regulations to do a daily inspection to make sure the brakes and lights worked. It was a big responsibility. If there was a train accident where a train hit a car because the driver hadn't been paying attention they'd call me down to South Portland in Maine to do an inspection and analyze the damage. Even if there was only a little dent to the car it had to be checked out – that was the law, and the car driver would have to fill in an accident report. The wages were good on the railroad, and in a way I was sad to retire but I had other things to do, and plenty of places to go like Nova Scotia which I really enjoyed visiting. I like sight seeing, I enjoy learning about new cultures and I always have. Everybody's got their own thing, their own culture. There are more people in the world - and more things going on in the world, than just around here.

Yes, I guess I do have a lot of hobbies and interests. My brother Gordon and I have been written about in the Boston Globe. A journalist came up and ran a story about our family camp. It's been in our family since 1937. I've also co-hosted and produced an episode of a television show called Your Kingdom Today. That show covered the August 2015 McIndoe Falls celebration for the 100th anniversary of the last log drive on the Connecticut. I enjoyed being in the tv studio, the process went pretty much how I imagined and it reminded me of my engineering work, there were cameras, sound technicians, lots of highly

detailed stuff going on. I've also appeared on TV talking about hunting and been interviewed by author Scott Wheeler who asked me about the time I spent serving in the military.

The people of Island Pond have a long military history and have always been supportive of all our servicemen and women. My twin brother Gordon mailed care packages out to service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every month people in Island Pond would sign a card or a letter for Angela Crown who served aboard the USS Hue City in 2003. I'd mail the cards out to the USS Hue City when Angela was serving in the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea. The USS Hue City CG-66 is a guided missile cruiser. When she was stationed out in the Red Sea the ship provided air coverage for the Combat Air Patrol while they enforced the no-fly zones in southern Iraq.

The Hue City is the only ship named after a battle in the Vietnamese war. She is named for the Battle of Hue, fought in the city during the Tet Offensive in 1968 by the 1st Marine Regiment (composed of 1st Battalion/1st Marines, 1st Battalion/5th Marines, 2nd Battalion/5th Marines and attached units). Within hours of 9/11 the USS Hue City was out there with all the other war ships patrolling the waters around New York and protecting the city.

Like many members of Legion Post #80 I also enjoy participating in the Memorial Day Parade and riding in the motorcade. The railroad is still my passion and a big part of my life. I also enjoy my 'coffee and bullshit' sessions with the boys at Irvings. And I like going to our camp up at Yellow Bog. I took Ellen there a few times. I feel at home in the woods. These days I go with my brother Gordon and we check the animal tracks to see what's been around like bear, coon, fox and deer. I hunt, but I rarely fish, I don't like to be waiting around. Brook Trout are another matter, I get a bag of worms and catch about three or four Brook Trout and then I cook them, they make a really good meal.

Where did I get my "McGee" nickname?" My father named me it after a popular radio program that ran from 1935 to 1959. The show was called

Fibber McGee & Molly, and it was pretty funny. My dad looked over at me one night while we were all listening to the show and said: "Right, your name can be McGee." What am I thinking of doing next? Well, I really would like to take another trip back to Iceland. "

## Volume II – Island Pond Insights

The latest book by Brighton author and NEK-TV producer S J Campbell (aka Sharon Biron) will feature true stories exclusive to Island Pond, Norton and East Brighton. Sharon's last book titled Island Pond Reflections was published in May 2015.

Volume II, is due to be published this fall. The book is an easy to read and highly enjoyable book, with photos and amazing true stories about life in Island Pond. Read about the very first cars in town and who owned which model and how auto accidents were caused when drivers in Island Pond didn't know how to control their steering wheels.

Read about the secret 'Settler's Bones' hidden in a box covered with a rock in Maurice Barnes' Lakeside Campground. Sharon reveals the rest of the Greg Stafford interview and what REALLY happened during 'that' shootout on Derby Street back in 1989. Read about John Burns who is known as the 'Prince of Hoboes' and how he arrived in Island Pond in August 2015 with his dog Bandit. There is also a chapter mentioning family names in 'Public Notices' which appeared in the Essex County Herald from the 1800s on.

Sharon has also dug up bone chilling tales of true murders and robberies in Island Pond such as the time when Mrs. Chief War Eagle was found dead at Spectacle Pond, and the tale of John Kane who murdered a man in Earth People's Park and burned down a building in Burlington three decades later. Read about an elderly lady who was found unconscious, yet still clutching a melted telephone, after receiving a massive electric shock through the handset at her home on Derby Street. She also writes of a 'missing father of

two' who turned up living happily in California under an assumed name. Read about gun accidents and "Letters from the Front" that reveal the horrors witnessed by local men and women in the trenches and field hospitals of World War I France. Read about the missing Abenaki and the curious 'Norton Plan', a government program designed to repopulate Norton with a Swedish colony in 1890-91.

Sharon has found a rare photo of children sweeping up ashes after the town's YMCA burned down. Read about the actions of police officers in a neighboring state who, in the early 1900s, put their town's psychiatric patients on a train bound for Island Pond and dumped them here. Also included in Volume II are stories about Canaan's whiskey smuggling judge, the night a safe was robbed from Hill's Garage, and the tragic hotel fire in Norton that claimed the life of a young and beautiful maidservant named Katie. These stories and more are in Sharon's collector's edition 300+ page book along with a matching bookmark and free first class shipping. Sharon signs each book with a personalized note. Books may be pre-ordered in advance by sending a check for \$24.99 made out to S. J. Campbell, PO Box 391, Island Pond, VT 05846. Sharon will write a personal note if you would like a special dedication inside the book for friends or family.

Please keep us up to date on your mailing address to continue receiving the newsletter.



*The Island Pond House and the Stewart House (above) were under the same management and located side by side. IPHS archive photo.*



Above is an advertisement for the Island Pond Hotel or House dated after 1875. IPHS archives.

## Yearbooks Wanted

Please help us... The Island Pond Historical Society is asking for high school yearbooks to digitally copy. The Brighton High School yearbooks we have on disc are 1957, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1966, and 1967. We do not have any yet from St. Mary's. If you have a yearbook and are willing to let us borrow it we will pay the shipping costs for you to send it and we will return ship it after we have it copied. Contact Betty Gilfillan 802-723-6282 or email Betty...at trapperbill@myfairpoint.net.

## Recent Deaths

### Life Members

Benjamin Basil Col. Ret.  
 Margaret "Peggy" Worth Castonguay  
 Robert Christie Sr. Msgt. Ret.  
 Geraldine Powers Dufour  
 Geraldine Aldrich Percy

### Members

Mark R. Clough

William Barlow  
 Hanford Biron  
 Pricilla Mckinney Burgess  
 Edith May Cargill  
 Bentley J. Castrogiovanni

Island Pond Historical Society

## Recent Museum Donations

Eileen Rooney donated a St. Mary's 60th Jubilee Booklet and a collection of her father's basketball photos.

Bruce Chesney donated a lodge book and items from the railroad freight shed.

Chris and Susan Dale Kenyon donated a large 1878 map.

Mike and Jan Clarke donated photos and a BHS collection of student newsletters.

Janice Fournier and Bradley Reynolds donated scrapbooks of newspaper clippings that belonged to Denise Reynolds.

Jim and Pat Lontine donated a booklet of early (1906) Island Pond photos.

George and Stella Halpern donated a quilt that belonged to Ernest Allen

Norma Stafford Grearson donated five books on the railroad.

Janet Wahlberg donated genealogies of Calvin Wing and John Cheney.

### Memorial Donations

Ann Marie (Palmer) Couture donated in memory of Mr. Warren Brown.

Glynn E. and Sandra L. Brooks donated in memory of loved ones.

### Non-Members

Camille Deslandes  
 Brigitte Graham  
 Gerald Hunt  
 Harry Lapointe  
 Denis Leclerc



*Above is a view of the Essex House and the Village Hotel on Cross Street in 1878.*

**Island Pond Historical Society, Inc.**

P.O. Box 408

Island Pond, Vermont 05846-0408

**Application or Membership Renewal for Memberships ending August 31, 2016.**

Mail to: Island Pond Historical Society, P.O. Box 408, Island Pond, VT 05846-0408

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships     \$8.00 Regular     \$15.00 Contributing     \$25.00 Life Member  
 Husband and wife may jointly share all memberships.

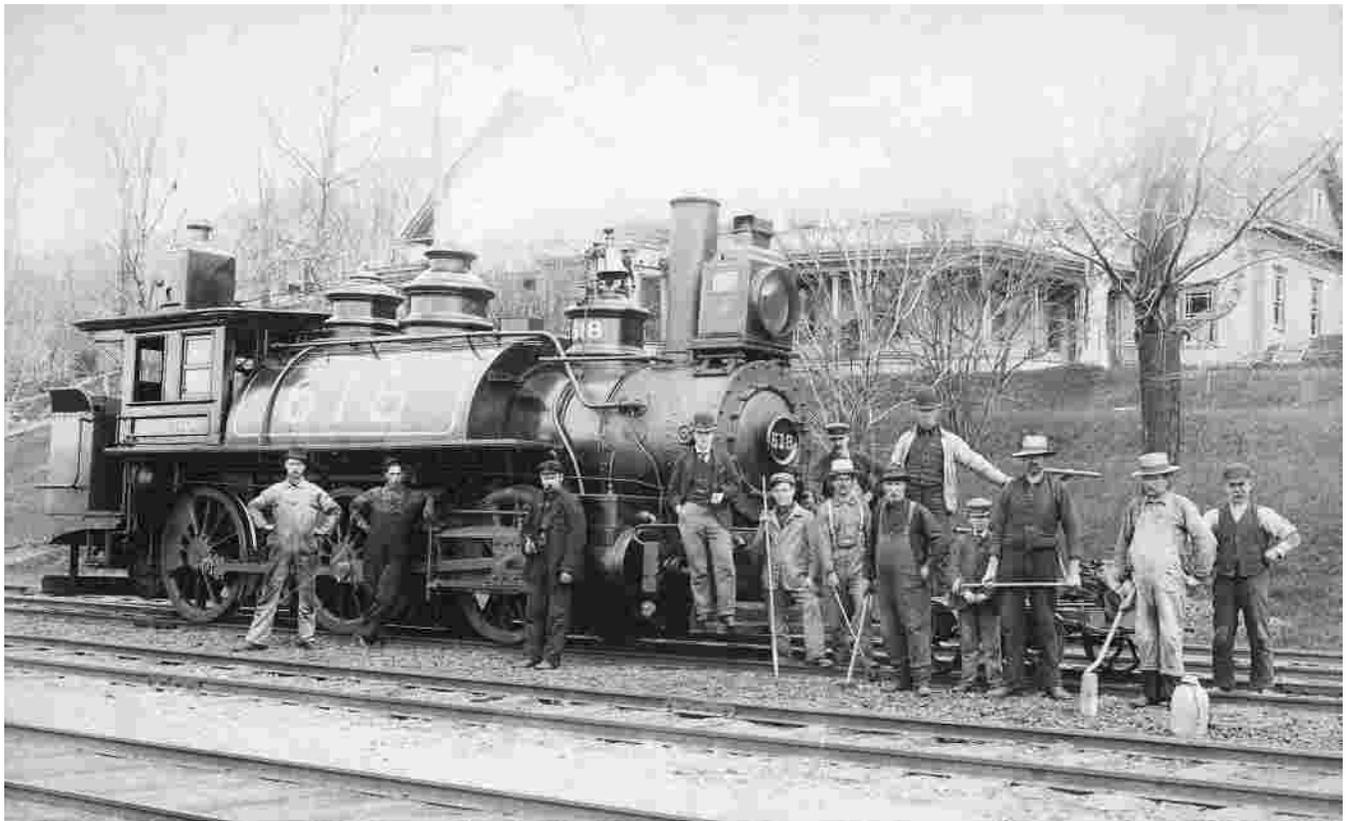
**Mail Your Renewal Today!**

**Special Notice:**

Membership cards mailed to those enclosing self-addressed, stamped envelope.

\*Life memberships include automatic listing on Memorial Roll of Honor for individuals and/or both parties of shared life membership. Others may be listed on the Memorial for a donation of \$50.00 per person.

Please place Memorial Roll information on a separate sheet of paper.



*This is a photo of a crew working the Island Pond railroad yard. IPHS archive photo.*

**Island Pond Historical Society Inc.  
Box 408  
Island Pond, Vermont 05846**

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