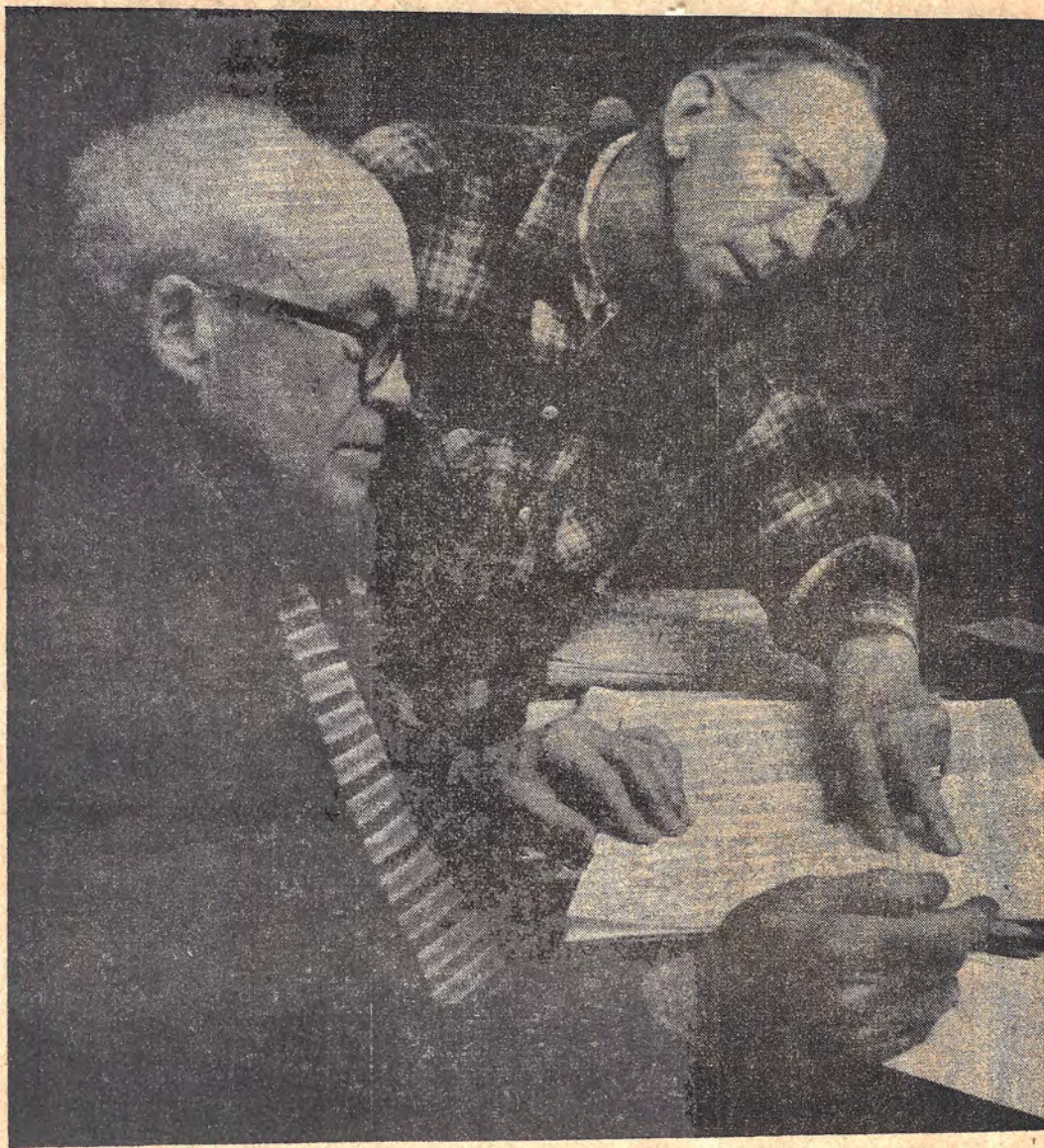


Badger's 'History Of Gilmanton'



CAREFUL HANDLING AND PERUSAL of the eight old bound volumes of William Badger's History of Gilmanton, which only a few months ago was "re-discovered" in the Gilmanton Town Hall — Hilary Jefferson, seated at left, and Selectman Melvin Bunker are working with others in indexing, photographing and reproducing the contents of the large books which will be safeguarded for the future. The history by Badger covers the period from approximately 1845 to 1874, and continues the earlier efforts of Rev. Daniel Lancaster who had brought the history up to 1845.

"... And Perpetuate

the love of All

For Their Native

Hills and Valleys"

William Badger

GILMANTON—On Jan. 16, 1967, Heidi Lee Cassavaugh was born in Laconia, becoming one of the newest natives in the Town of Gilmanton.

In May of 1776, Joseph Philbrick died, and was the first person to be buried in the Smith Meeting House Cemetery in Gilmanton.

The former account occurred within the past few months and thus becomes a passage in the long and continuing history of the town of Gilmanton—a part of the town records.

The latter account is one of the first documented items in the beginning history of the town, which was granted a charter in 1727, only 50 years before Mr. Philbrick's death.

The announcement of the arrival of Heidi Lee Cassavaugh, (daughter of Terry and Beatrice (Adel) Cassavaugh), as a new resident of the town may be found in the crisp print of a modern typed form in the town clerk's office.

But also in the town clerk's or Selectmen's office may be found the account of Mr. Philbrick, this account taken from the history written by Rev. Daniel Lancaster who undertook to compile the first history of the town, bringing such accounts up to date as of August of 1845.

Having ended his endeavors in 1845, Rev. Lancaster explains in a footnote, the great amount of work involved and the "limited patronage" necessitating a history written more briefly than

he intended. But in his footnotes Rev. Lancaster adds:

"Should the readers be interested, instructed and benefited, and a love of their native place be thereby cherished in the bosom of his townsmen, at least one object of the writer will be accomplished."

This one hope at least, expressed by Rev. Lancaster was fulfilled.

Another man who did cherish the old community, and did indeed find the works of the earlier historian, interesting, instructive and benefitting, was Hon. William Badger.

In his preface to his own history, which constitutes in general an extension of Rev. Lancaster's work, Badger tells of his "love and reverence for that most worthy and early minister in town...."

Badger continued the labors of Rev. Lancaster and brought the town history along from 1845, when Lancaster ended his writing, to the year 1874.

Badger in his preface refers to himself as an "editor" and of his works "claims no originality, but only to have collected and added the facts occurring since the date of his (Lancaster's) publication and, hoping to

preserve the memory of the fathers of the town, and justly record some of the acts of their descendants to increase and perpetuate the love of all for their

native hills and valleys."

Mr. Badger was governor of New Hampshire for two years, from 1834 to 1836. He was born in Gilmanton, Jan. 13, 1779 and during his lifetime was a state representative, a member and one-time president of the N.H. Senate, and was a member of the Trustees of the former Gilmanton Academy.

Badger admits that much was omitted in his own history, that should have been inserted.

"Still," he concludes in his preface, "it is hoped that the great end and object afore mentioned, will be attained."

Thus did two men in earlier times, endeavor to retain for the future as much as possible the facts of history before and during their own times.

Each of the early historians also expressed the hope that their work would be appreciated and continued.

And as history continues, and as Badger discovered Lancaster, so has Hilary Jefferson discovered Badger.

And now does Hilary Jefferson, a native in the town of Gilmanton, undertake, as was the hope of Badger, to "increase and perpetuate the love of all for their native hills and valleys."

Within recent months, during his visits to make taped interviews with some of the older citizens of Gilmanton, on a project to obtain more information of a historical nature, Mr. Jer-



THE OLD GILMANTON CORNER as seen looking southward on the road to Pittsfield at the junction of Route 107 and Route 140 of today. At left is the former homestead of the late historian and scholar, Curtis Hidden Page. Out of view at lower left is the location of the old Gilmanton Academy, still standing, and out of view at lower right, the site of the present Gilmanton Corner Store.

person had the occasion to talk with Mrs. Martha Watson, Mrs. Florence Durgin and Frank Place, and Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Brown.

During the course of the talk, Mr. Watson asked him if he had heard of the History William Badger had written. He had not, but his interest was stirred.

Questioning brought out the fact that the eight volume manuscript had been in the hands of Paul Hoag, who deat in old manuscripts and books. Mr. Hoag has left Gilmanton and moved to Connecticut, where Mr. Jefferson contacted him by letter. Mr. Hoag informed Mr. Jefferson he had given the history to the town before he left.

Upon checking with the selectmen, it was found that one of them, Melvin Bunker, did know of the manuscripts and showed them to Mr. Jefferson.

Mr. Jefferson was allowed to study the manuscripts and found, that even after about 80 years they were still very decipherable.

At present Mr. Jefferson is making the name-index for the volumes, and next, will undertake the "event index."

He is being assisted in this work by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Brown, Mrs. Nathaniel Kimball and Herbert Olmstead, all members of the Gilmanton Historical Society. Miss Zella Parsons has volunteered to do the typing and Edward Maher of Gilmanton Iron Works and Reading, Mass., had loaned a microfilm machine to the town. The first task will be to photograph the history, to make the work for typing more simple, and to save the unnecessary handling of the manuscripts.

(Later, all town records will be photographed for the same reasons.)

Upon completion of the typing, an effort is going to be made to raise the necessary money for publication of the history.

Mr. Jefferson, now 67, is a native of the town, having been born in the house near the "corners" where he now resides. He is a former physical education instructor in Lansing, Michigan and Yonkers, N.Y. He retired in 1955 and is now living in the old family home in which he was born. His parents were the late Mark and Theodora Jefferson, his mother a native and a student at the old Gilmanton Academy.

Mr. Jefferson, incidentally, was one of the many townspeople who voted at a public meeting about a month ago to retain the now - unused academy building for the town, as a memento to the past and a building to serve a continued use.

Although bound heavy, rugged leatherized covers, the eight volumes "discovered" in the town hall are being handled very carefully. Years have turned brittle the pages, now yellowed and the delicate scrolled handwriting, although legible, has faded somewhat.

Very tenderly the books are laid out on the selectmen's long tables and the note-taking is in progress. The eight books in general constitute manuscripts in ABC order, up to H.

Manuscripts A and B deal with the "Proprietary" history of the town, while C, D and E cover the "Civil" history. "Literary" history is compiled under Manuscript F, and Manuscript H includes the "Biographical and Geological" data concerning Old Gilmanton.

Early accounts at random often bring in the name of Gilman, members of the early founding

families of the town when the grant was made in 1727. Twenty-four of the members of the Gilman family, and 153 others were among the first settlers. Other names prominent during the early years of the settlement were George P. Avery and H. J. French.

Dudley Leavitt was the first postmaster in the area, in the first post office established in 1796.

A description of the Jones Mills area in 1770 accounts for two grist mills, a saw mill a mill for making shingles and another for clapboards, a threshing machine, oil mill and other machinery.

On April 28, 1884, the article relates, a severe freshet on the stream destroyed most of the mills and the re-building saw the added creation of cloth dryer mills and a sleight and wagon mill operated by Richard Jones, Esq.

Batchelder's Mills at Lake Village (the Laconia area at the time) was one of the earliest of the cotton mills in the vicinity

A first newspaper in the com-

Goes on Modern Microfilm



THE TREES ARE BIGGER NOW, and perhaps some have now disappeared, but this view of Province Rd. heading into Gilmanon Corners village has changed little from some 50 or 60 years ago except for the paving of the street. At left is the old Cogswell House, now owned by Mrs. Margaret Bartholomew,

and beyond it the old Andrew Mack house, now owned by Harold Brinig. Beyond the picket fence at right is the home of R. H. Hughes, and also the home of Hilary Jefferson who lives there in the house where he was born.

munity was the "Academy Vil-1803 by an arrangement with la-1887." published as early as Meredith.

The earliest grist mill ac- counted for is one having been located at the Lower Falls on the Suncook River in the settle- ment of Avery Town, which in 1778 became known as Gilman- ton Iron Works.

Jonathan Clark, in 1773, was the first tanner and currier in the town.

Moving a bit out of what is now Gilmanon, the manuscripts contain the following historical data:

The first post office in La- conia was established in 1824 with H. G. Prescott the post- master.

In 1773 John Lougee opened a store (presumedly in Laconia).

The Weirs Bridge was built in

Joseph Fellows Sr., was the first settler in Belmont. His log cabin was built at the spot later occupied by Brown's Village Hotel, now the site of a modern laundromat.

The bridge to Davis Island (now Governor's Island) was built in 1820.

And back into Gilmanon there is an account of the Gil- manon Vigilant-Alert Society (1816) and records of the Union Factory Documents (1836).

Throughout the old volumes are warmly written observances of the character of long ago. On

one occasion Mr. Badger wrote of the former wilderness of the entire area as first viewed by the early settlers.

As follows he described a view as seen by an observer standing on one of the eminences of the Suncook Range, previous to the first settlement.

Mr. Badger writes:

"There would have appeared as far as the eye could reach from the Winnepisiogee on the North and West, to the Cata- mount and the Blue Hills on the South and East, nothing but the monotony of the scene. Here

are dense forests and deep ravines with no cultivated spot to relieve

and there some tracks of savage beasts, and more savage men, might have been described, but no mark of civilized beings, or of the cultivation of the soil was as yet visible.

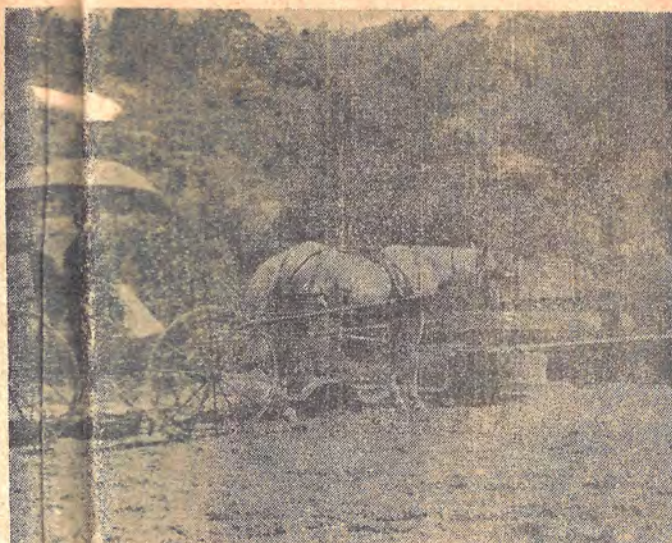
"A different day was however at hand. The time was near when the forests were to be levelled, and the soil tilled. As, in the appointed time, the soli- tary barque of Columbus was seen upon the waters of the At- lantic, and the vessel of Capt J. Smith first coasted our shores for discovery, so in the allotted season, the first explorers of this wilderness boundaries of the town were abroad in the forests of the Winnepisiogee and the Suncook tracing the lines, and bounding the lots on which the Fathers of Gilmanon made their camps, and built log houses.

How different the view now en- joyed by the privileged man, who gains the summit of Mount Major, the highest peak of the Suncook Range.

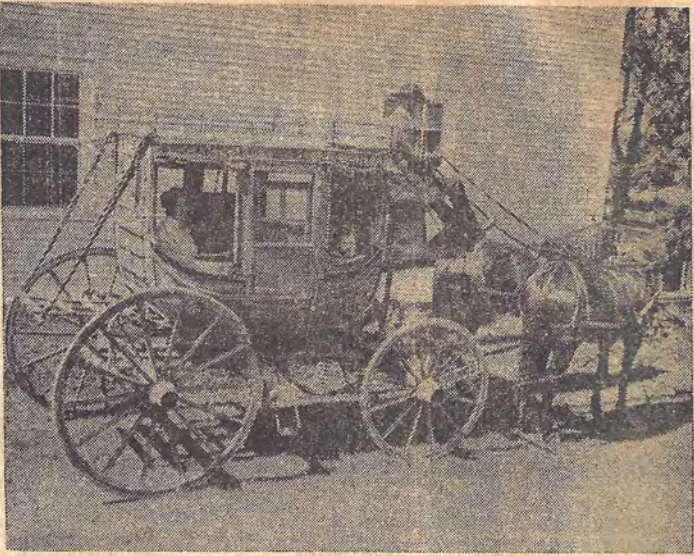
Before him still is the Lake bespangled with its hundreds of islands; but now, instead of the birchen canoe of the savage, it bears on its bosom the steamer palaces of the age and other boats.

On every side are visible the smiling villages, which have sprung up by the waters of the Winnepisiogee and Suncook, while he beholds the wilderness as by magic changed into count- less well-cultivated farms, and instead of wild beasts that roam the forest, the hills are covered with joyful flocks and heards.

Such a transformation might seem more like enchantment than reality, didn't the exper- ience of everyday verify the present aspect of the scenery, and show what Gilmanon is, contrasted with what Gilmanon was."

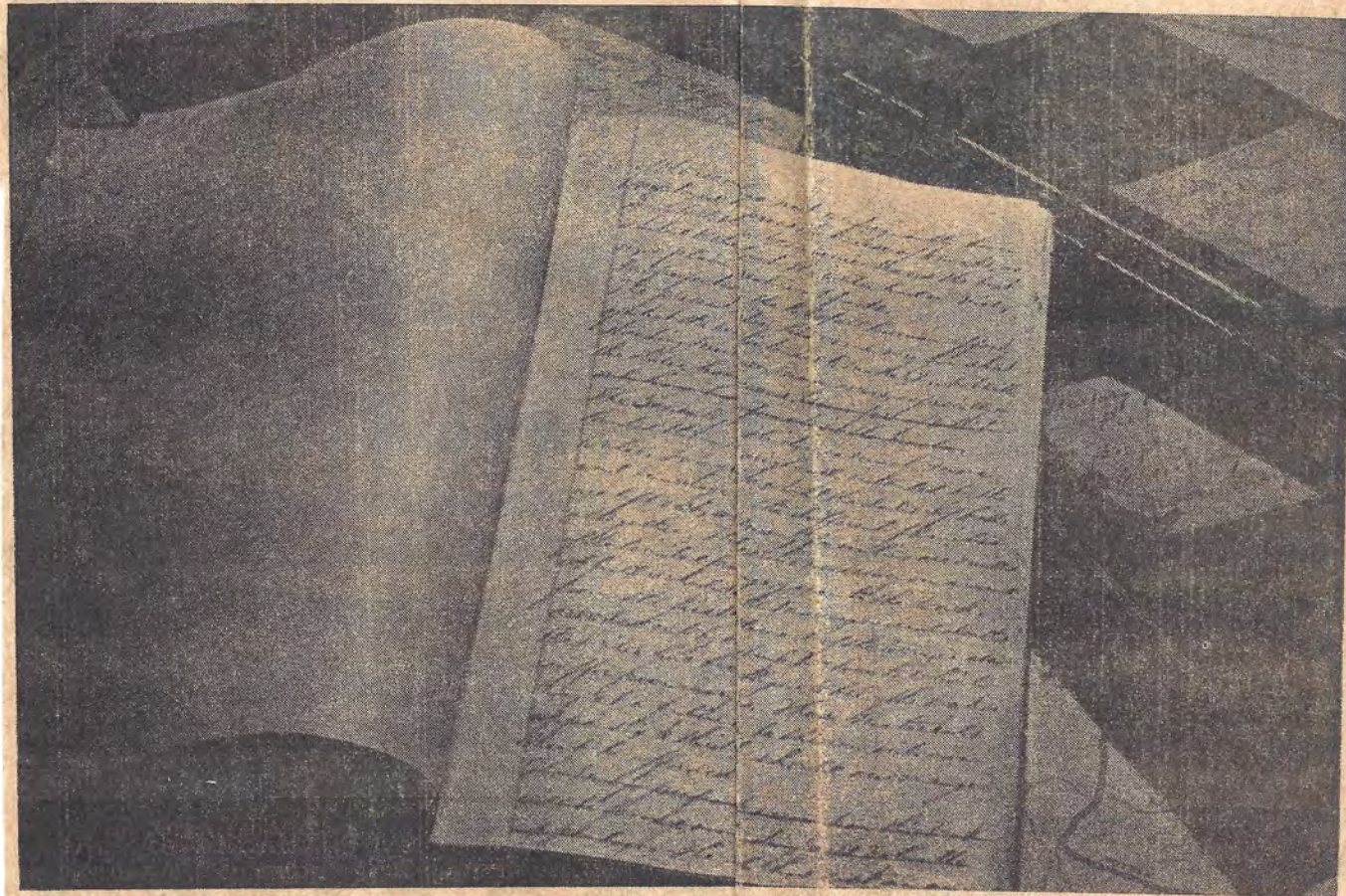


THE MARSH HILL SPRING, still flowing and often visited by those desiring the pure cold water, was a welcomed stop for the horses and the passengers making the trip up the long grade toward Gilmanon on what is now Route 107. The umbrella indicates a hot summer day. Elsewhere on this page is printed the legend on the small white sign over the wooden half-bael.



THE GILMANTON-BELMONT STAGE in decades past was popular mode of travel between the towns. The driver in this picture was Ed Eveleth, a Gilmanton native who died only two years ago at the age of 93. The woman passenger is identified as Miss Louise Von Bernuth and the youngster is not identified.

'Remembering Still ... The Wayside Spring'



OLD AND BEAUTIFUL is the handwriting of the History of Gilmanton as put down in pen and ink by the hand of former New Hampshire Governor, William Badger, about 80 years ago. Although the pages of the heavy volumes have yellowed with age,

are delicate to touch, they are very legible and ciptive. Interested townspeople are now photographing the eight volumes and typing out the history toid future handling of the pages.

As one who often appreciated the convenience and refreshing water of the Marsh Hill spring on Route 107, which has served travelers for many years, as it still does, Elmer Davis, an 83-year-old native of Gilmanton, readily recalled from memory the wording of a small sign that was once located there.

Although there may have been a slight difference in the exact wording, Mr. Davis recited the poem very closely to the thoughts attributed to the original poet, Isaac Saaborn.

Mr. Davis' recollection of the welcoming sign is as follows:

"Oh weary traveler

"Stay thy feet

"Take from this fountain

"Pure and sweet

"A cup of water in his name,

"Both rich and poor the same,

"And go thy way, remembering still

"The wayside spring beneath the hill."