

# Campton Historical Society

Spring 2011

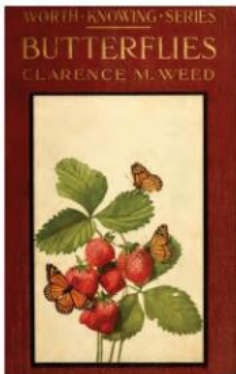
## Armont Inn

By Vicki Kelly

The Armont Inn has been a local icon in Campton for decades. I held my first teenage job there as a chambermaid and buffet waitress. I have only known it as belonging to the Murphys, but, of course, the Inn existed long before I did. I remember Mrs. Murphy and Richard talking about how the Inn came to be when I was in their employ, but alas, being a teenager I did not make the effort to keep the stories in my memory. So one evening just before he left for Florida this past November, Richard was gracious enough to tell me the stories again, giving me the chance to truly listen. From there, I did a little research and have gathered what I found as follows.



### First, A Little Family History



Clarence Weed, Richard W. Murphy's grandfather, was a professor of zoology and entomology at New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (first in Hanover until it moved to Durham in 1893). His extensive career also included the position of editor of the entomology department at *American Naturalist*; he was drafted by President Wilson to establish and run the School Garden Army of the United States in Washington, D. C.; and he was president of Lowell Teacher's College (now part of the University of Lowell which includes the School of Nursing at none other than Weed Hall). His published works include "*Butterflies Worth Knowing*" (Doubleday, Page & Company, New York, 1917) and *The School Garden Book* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1909). Dr. Weed and his family obtained the Ellsworth House as a vacation home (still in the Murphy family) in 1904.

### Family Connections

C. George Armstrong came from Sussex, New Brunswick, Canada where he created Sussex Ginger Ale. He immigrated to Chelmsford, Massachusetts where he founded the successful Chelmsford Springs Company. Chelmsford Springs was sold to Canada Dry in 1928. His ginger ale, originally Sussex Golden, is legendary in Chelmsford and in New Brunswick.

Mr. Armstrong and Dr. Weed became acquainted through Marjory Armstrong who was Mr. Armstrong's daughter and Dr. Weed's secretary. Richard told me that his grandfather introduced Mr. Armstrong to the Ellsworth Hill area. Mr. Armstrong bought land and started building in 1929. It began as a running farm. The family home is located just before and abutting the Inn property on the way up the hill. In 1935, Mr. Armstrong built the Inn, including the stone wall and turnout, for family to visit. He built Chelmsford Golden Ginger Ale bottles into the wall over the dining room fireplace mantle. Sadly, Mr. Armstrong died in 1936.



Richard Weed Murphy grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts. He and his parents moved to New Hampshire in 1947. He went to high school in Plymouth and took Hotel (now called Hospitality Management) at the University of New Hampshire. While in school he worked at the Shawmut Inn in Kennebunkport, Maine, Cliff House (the old one) in Ogunquit, Maine, and Ravine House in Randolph,



New Hampshire. After graduating he worked at the Statler Hilton in Hartford, Connecticut. He did a stint in the armed forces. His parents began wintering in Florida in the late 1950's, and he began working there. In fact, he did purchasing for the Bellevue Biltmore Hotel (which is an old, huge hotel much like the Mount Washington Hotel) in Clearwater Belleair, Florida for more than twenty years until it became a year-round establishment in 1985.

The Inn stayed in the Armstrong family for some time after Mr. Armstrong's death. It wasn't until the early 1960's that the Murphys came back into the picture. At the age of 24, Richard had decided that what he wanted was the Armont Inn, and so he obtained it and began running it as a seasonal establishment. By then, the Inn had been closed for 14 years but needed little restoration, Richard says, as it was a wonderfully built building. He managed to put restrictions on abutting properties prohibiting view obstructions. The building has never been added to or renovated from its original state. The Chelmsford Golden Ginger Ale bottles still festoon the fireplace.

### **As We Know It**

Richard began running the Inn during the summer and returning to Florida for the remainder of the year. In the beginning, for the first five years or so, the Inn was a full service restaurant serving three meals a day with cooks and wait staff. It was open to the general public. Sunday dinners were served as well. September drew a lot of people. However this became too much to handle, and the business was toned down a bit.

Since then, meals are offered to patrons, currently breakfast and dinner with sandwiches for lunch available to go. Locals can make reservations for the popular weekly meals, turkey dinners on Wednesday evenings and the famous buffet dinners on Thursdays. Custom special occasions can also be booked. Weddings, reunions, parties, and quiet dinners have been common.

Richard's hospitality and interest in his patrons make him a genial host. He mentioned once having an ambassador and his wife, Heinz Warneke, a sculptor who Richard recalled did the elephants at the Philadelphia Zoo, Czechoslovakian refugees, and artists visit the Inn. Most notably, Roger Curtis's

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artist group came annually for a week-long painting course at the end of September. In fact, the Curtis Artists group was the inspiration for the now traditional turkey dinners. He has had many returning patrons throughout the years. Richard was honored to be of note in Marjory Broad's local hotels book, *The Old Hotels and Inns of Campton* (1992).

I asked Richard how things have changed over the years. He pointed out that, in addition to the structure of the Inn, the recipes have *not* changed a lot. In fact, many of the dishes served during the 2010 buffet season are the same recipes that were served during my waitressing days. Richard mentioned Mother's Tomato Aspic Salad (a gelatin ring with cloves) that has received strong reactions over the years. That recipe was published in one of our town cookbooks, *Campton Baptist Women's Fellowship Presents Personal Recipes* (1971). Richard did say that business has changed. New roads and the construction boom which dotted our area with condominiums and other second homes have resulted in a change in patrons. He says people don't plan ahead any more. Gone are the days of leisurely stays; most guests stay only a night or two. Still, Richard enjoys the whole season at the Armont Inn only getting weary in the late part of the year when the darkness sets in. Then it's time to go back to sunny Florida and anticipate the next Armont season, which Richard says he will continue to do as long as he can.

*Thanks to John & Anita Downing for their shared knowledge and library resources.*

*Thanks also to Becca Kelly for her help with photography.*

## Jellied Tomato Salad

- 1 pkg. lemon Jello                      ¼ tsp. pepper
- 3 Tbsp. vinegar                          ½ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. sugar                            1 ¾ c. boiling tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. chopped onions                or tomato juice
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves

• Pour boiling tomatoes or juice on jello and stir  
• until dissolved. Add vinegar and sugar. Cool, then  
• add remaining ingredients. Pour into molds and chill  
• until firm.

Margaret Murphy

## The Lady and the Loom

Marcia Vandermast, a long time resident of Plymouth, has been weaving since the early seventies. She started out taking a home study class with Ayottes Designery in Sandwich and from there began to teach herself the art of weaving. Many of her bags, mats and runners have been displayed and sold at local fairs around NH.

Another of Marcia's interest is restoring old looms which brought her to the Campton Historical Society where for the past few months she has been restoring the loom of Dr. Henry Applegate Cheney. The loom was handmade by Dr. Cheney and donated by the Cheney family. Dr. Cheney was one of the last doctors to live and work in Campton Village. The Historical Society is in the process of working on a new exhibit featuring more information on this interesting man.



submitted by: Sandy Decarie

The loom was put back into working order thanks to Marcia. She will be using it in a demonstration on Old Home Day, August 5th. You can also check out the loom and all our exhibits on any Thursday from 9 to 4.

# Campton Historical Society 2011 Calendar of Events

**Note that Monday programs will start at 7:00 PM**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Feb. 11,<br>Friday    | Potluck, Popcorn and a Free Flick starting at 6:00pm   |
| April 16,<br>Saturday | Fieldtrip - Dr. Steven Hamburg Cellar Holes on Bald Mountain   |
| April 18,<br>Monday   | Charles Dona - Talk about the Appalachian Trail  |
| May 16,<br>Monday     | Alex Ray - The Reuse of Old Buildings  |
| May 28,<br>Saturday   | Spring Concert and Ham & Bean Supper - Live Music by The Mardin and Thompson Boys                                  |
| June 11,<br>Saturday  | Ceremony to Dispose Old Flags from 10:00-12:00   |
| June 20,<br>Monday    | Maggie Stier - The Old Man of the Mountain: Substance and Symbol   |
| July 18,<br>Monday    | Russ Cohen - Edible Wild Plants and Mushrooms of New England PART 2 (He is picking up where he left off last year) |
| August 6,<br>Saturday | Old Home Day - CHS Flyer of Events   |
| Aug. 15,<br>Monday    | Marcia Schmidt Blaine - Saving the Mountains: NH & the Creation of the National Forests                            |
| Aug. 27,<br>Saturday  | Saint Gaudens Museum Fieldtrip from 9:00-3:00  |
| Sept. 17,<br>Saturday | Fieldtrip - House Tour Aarmont Inn featuring and ... (to be announced soon)  |
| Sept. 19,<br>Monday   | Bryon Middlekauf - The Geology of Campton  |
| Oct. 17,<br>Monday    | Steve Taylor - New Hampshire's Grange Movement: Its Rise, Triumph and Decline                                      |
| Nov. 14,<br>Monday    | Annual meeting and program: Steve Ash - Blacksmithing  |
| Dec. 4,<br>Sunday     | Community Holiday Concert and Cookie Swap  |

**SAVE THE DATE** - Old Home Day is Saturday August 6th this year. Plans are being finalized so please keep checking the web site for updates. A flyer will be mailed to our members as the date gets closer. Be ready to display your antique vehicle and additionally this year, your classic bicycle. We are hoping all sorts of different bikes make it to the display area this year. If you would like to help CHS with its role in Old Home Day - such quilting etc... Please call Paul at 536-5995 or email at paulyelle@gmail.com

## Volunteers Needed

submitted by: Sandy Decarie

The Historical Society would once again like to open their doors on Saturdays during the months of July and August from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Two volunteers would be needed for each day. Our new Carriage Shed addition should be up and running for the summer with new exhibits and we would like to show that off as well as new exhibits in the main hall.

We will also be looking for some help getting the new tool shed set up and carriage shed cleaned up and set up to displays. If you are into random acts of kindness—the Town Pond on Town Pond road needs a new latch and a coat of paint or stain (I am not sure which one).

**ITEMS WANTED** - File cabinets, snow blower (small enough to get use on the handicap ramp) and clean fill for the eroding bank behind the CHS building. We are either looking for a donations or to borrow some heavy duty cast iron pots - the bigger the better. We are going to give bean hole beans a try this coming Old Home Day.

If you can help out with any of the above, please call Sandy Decarie at 536-8172.

## New Tool Shed

This is phase one to have the carriage shed be a display area. The tool shed will allow us to move the “non-display” stuff out of the carriage shed. Many thanks to Rick Doell and the Plymouth Regional High School students - the following is from his web page <http://sites.google.com/site/doellbuildingtrades> on the

For the second year in a row, Building Trades 2 has partnered with The Campton Historical Society on a project specific to the Town of Campton's architecture and history.....currently, the program's shed design is reflective of the two buildings on site. A large part of this project was spent on time period duplication of the existing buildings' trim, pitch and overall construction.



**Modular Frame to be transported separate from truss system**



**Trusses being fabricated..... re-calculating the pitch of the roof**

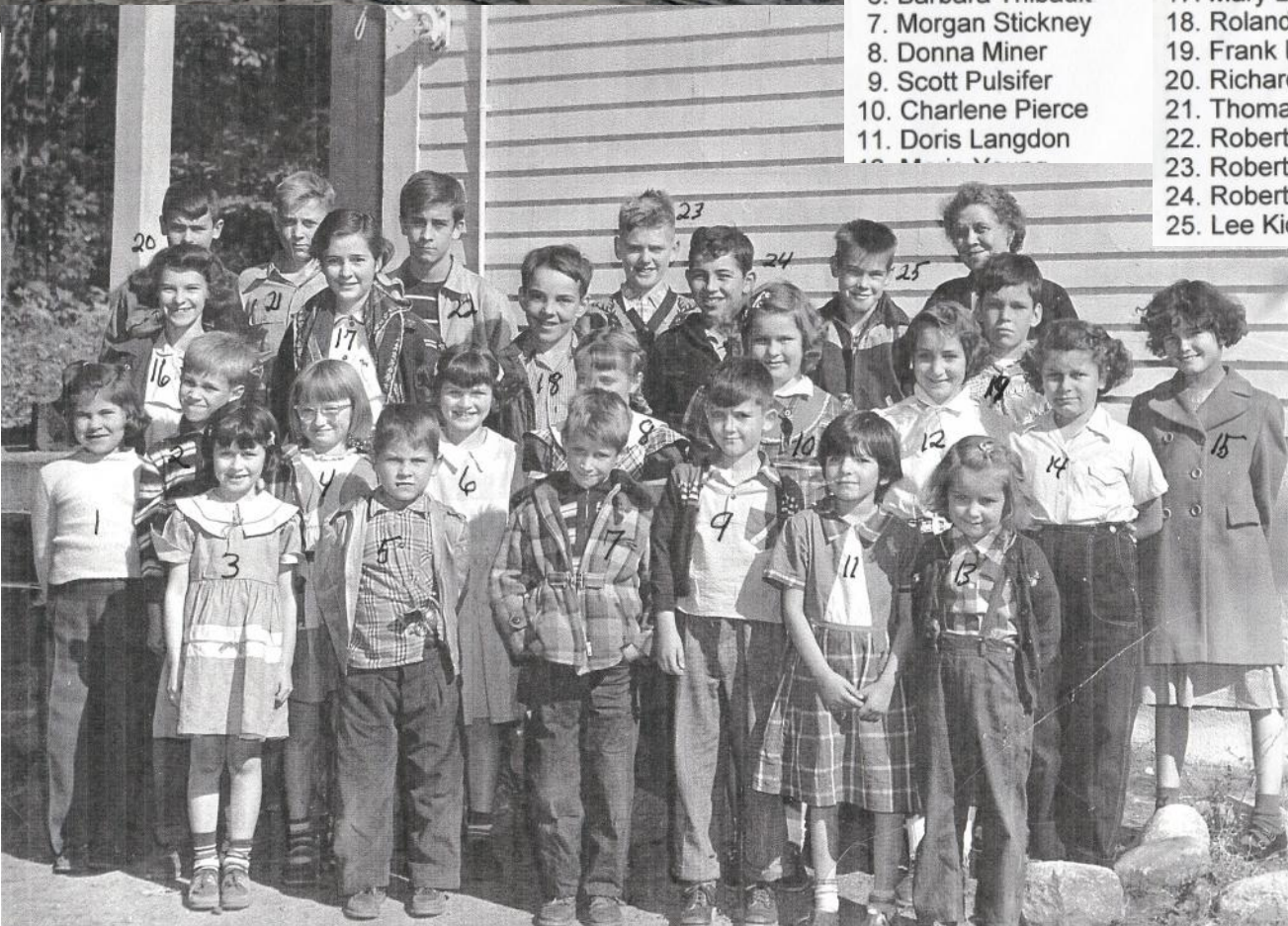
See this newsletter and more in  
full color at [CamptonHistorical.org](http://CamptonHistorical.org)

# Spring 2011 challenge! What do you know about this place?

Email: paulyelle@gmail.com or snail mail CHS - PO Box 160 - Campton NH 03223



1. Roseann Comeau
2. David Stickney
3. Ellen Thibault
4. Sally Pulsifer
5. John Comeau
6. Barbara Thibault
7. Morgan Stickney
8. Donna Miner
9. Scott Pulsifer
10. Charlene Pierce
11. Doris Langdon
12. Marie Young
13. Cheryl Young
14. Linda Mardin
15. Clara Langdon
16. Wanita Kidney
17. Mary Louise Pulsifer
18. Roland Raymond
19. Frank Langdon
20. Richard Mardin
21. Thomas Hartwell
22. Robert Mardin
23. Robert Moulton
24. Robert Raymond
25. Lee Kidney



Answer to the Fall 2010 Livermore Falls School 1953-54 Teacher Mrs. Avery

# A Dam in Search of an Answer

A big thank you goes out to the person at the Thornton Transfer Station that set aside this dam model for Campton Historical Society. We would love to know more about it. Do you know where the model came from? Do you know where it was used or displayed? Do you know who made it? What is going to happen if we plug it in? Email: pauluelle@gmail.com or snail mail CHS - PO Box 160 - Campton NH 03223



Since the dam powered the Dole Mill, I figured it would be a good time to put the following tidbit in. Also be sure to check out the Dole mill exhibit at Campton Historical Society.

## A brief look at Dole Mill July

submitted by: Walt Stockwell

The first mill at this site was founded in 1826 by Moses Cook. It was a carding mill, and known as Mad River Mill. The company also owned a grist mill that became known as the Little Mill, and several lumber tracts in the area.

In 1840, Cook brought his three nephews on board to help run the mill, Erastus, Moses, and John Dole. It became known as the Dole Brother Mill. In 1847, the name was changed to E. Dole and Company. Inc. In 1944, the mill was reorganized and incorporated.

In 1946, they were doing mostly carding and spinning of carpet wool, and had five mills doing contract carpet work. This eventually decreased to two, the China Mill in Suncook, NH, and the one in Campton.

The business was closed in 1956, mainly because the commission price for spinning carpet yarn got too high, and competition from other carpet mills. At that time, it was the 3rd oldest woolen company in the United States in continuous operation.

- Membership runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Membership is the primary source for mailing our monthly program notices and newsletters.
- The more members the merrier. Please help recruit friends, family and neighbors to help keep this great organization going.

We are looking forward to your support; send your check today. Mary E. Durgin, Treasurer

**DON'T FORGET YOU MEMBERSHIP !!!**

**Campton Historical Society**  
 www.CamptonHistorical.org  
 P.O. Box 160, Campton, NH 03223

Single Membership – \$12.00       Family Membership – \$20.00  
 Yearly membership is from October 1 through September 30.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Campton Historical Society and mail to PO Box 160, Campton, NH 03223

**Members**

Enclosed is my check for dues.

This check also includes a donation to support projects to be done in the Old Town Hall, headquarters of the Society.

# Campton Historical Society

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