

Washington Historical Society

2023 Newsletter

WHS Display at Broadband Festival

The Town of Washington is moving into the age of broadband. At the Summer Broadband Festival on Saturday, August 12, 10am to 2pm, the WHS will look back at the changes in communication with our display of several models of telephones that were used in Washington homes. In 1905 Washington Village entered the age of tele-communication when citizens could first talk with their neighbors without leaving their homes. That year New England Telephone & Telegraph Company ran lines about the village and installed a switchboard in the residence of Benjamin K. Ware. His wife, Alice, was the first operator. She continued to serve as operator for over sixty years. In 1907 the Washington Telephone Company was formed under the General laws of the State of Maine and remained in operation until 1968. This company provided telephone service not only to Washington but also to Liberty, Appleton, and Union.

This year three "new to us" telephones have been donated to the WHS. Bette Pelletier donated an early 1900 Western Electric oak crank telephone. This wall mounted phone was in her childhood home on Calderwood Road when her parents bought the home in 1961 from Jane Humes, widow of Sidney Humes. Bette's family used the phone until Washington went to dial service in 1968.

Tom and Debbie Johnston also donated an early Western Electric oak crank telephone. This phone is a two-piece set that includes an oak ringer box with crank and a black Bakelite desk phone. This phone likely spent 60 years in use connecting the Johnston's on Liberty Road with family and friends.

Earline Marquis donated a 1970s blue GE Thomson Consumer Electronics push button phone that her mother, Pat Creamer, used for years at her Hopkins Road home. This sleek, once modern phone is now a part of our history.

Come visit our telephone display on Sat, August 12th at the Broadband festival and also at our WHS Open House, August 26th from 10am to 1pm and at WHS Heritage Day, September 9th from 9am to 1pm both days at the Town House, 263 Razorville Rd.



Alonzo Bowman- Washington's Medal of Honor Recipient

by Jesse Casas & Don Grinnell

Alonzo Bowman, the eldest son of John and Eliza Bowman, was born on Collamore Ridge in Washington on June 15th 1848. He lied about his age and enlisted to fight in the Civil War by joining the 8th Maine Infantry Regiment on April 9, 1864. After his enlistment, his regiment saw action at Cold Harbor, Petersburg, (among other battles) and was at Appomattox Court House when General Lee surrendered to General Grant. Alonzo mustered out and returned to Maine in January 1866 when his regiment disbanded.

Alonzo returned to the military in October 1867 when he enlisted the regular U.S. Army, joining Company C, 8th Infantry. He served in various locations in the East during the Reconstruction before the 8th Infantry moved west to fight in the Indian Wars, eventually relocating to the Prescott, Arizona area where Alonzo married Carrie Hayden. In September 1876 he transferred to the 6th U.S. Cavalry. In August 1881, his company and 20 Indian scouts were ordered to find and arrest an Apache chief/medicine man named Noc-ay-det-linne who had been causing trouble among the settlers in the area.

After arresting the chief and returning to the post, the Indian scouts and others trailing behind the Army unit, mutinied and started firing into the soldiers near Cibicue Creek. When the Indian scouts started firing into the soldiers, Alonzo moved to the edge of a mesa and cleared mutineers from the area. He then led a charge into a creek bottom and cleared that area of the hostiles. For his bravery in action, Alonzo was awarded the Medal of Honor on November 4, 1882 for "Conspicuous and extraordinary bravery in attacking mutinous scouts".

In 1884 the 6th U.S. Cavalry relocated to Fort Bayard, New Mexico. According to military records, on October 3, 1885, Alonzo was shot about a mile from the garrison "without provocation by a desperate character." Alonzo died the next day. Sergeant Alonzo Bowman is buried in the military cemetery at Fort Bayard, NM. What happened to Carrie Hayden Bowman has yet to be determined.

Current Washington residents Donald, Joseph, and Gregory Bowman are related to Alonzo as their great, great, great grandfather, Thomas Bowman, and Alonzo's father John Bowman, Jr., were brothers.

L.M. Staples

WHS recently received a donation from Bette Pelletier of the outside business sign of L.M. Staples, a 19th century attorney who practiced law in Washington. Lindley M. Staples was born in Swanville, ME, on July 22, 1848. He was admitted to the bar in 1866 and set up practice in Washington. He resided in the house at the corner of Waldoboro Road and Razorville Road, currently the home of Marty Christie. His law office was on the second floor in the building at what is now 16 Waldoboro Road. Downstairs from his office was a millinery shop operated by his daughter-in-law, Hannah Staples.

Mr. Staples was a well-known, successful attorney in the area. He was one of the founders of the Knox County Bar Association and served as Knox County Attorney. He prosecuted several notable cases. He was also active in politics, elected as Knox County Senator in the Maine State Legislature, 1901-1913. Locally, he was a charter member of Mt. Olivet Lodge, and served as its first Master; he was one of the original ten subscribers to the Washington Telephone Co.; he served a short stint as postmaster, 1894-1898; and he was instrumental, working with Lucero Gibbs, in establishing the Washington Monument for the town's centennial celebration in 1911. Mr. Staples delivered the celebration's centennial "Historical Address" to a huge crowd, chronicling the early history of Washington, formerly Putnam. He died August 28, 1921 and is buried in the Maple Grove Cemetery.



Building Maintenance

Our recent maintenance work has focused on the Old Town House. The interior wall and ceiling boards that were loose have been secured. The threshold at the entrance door has been repaired and painting on the gable front completed. The floor will be painted this summer and the walls cleaned so we can start adding displays next year. Plans are to make curtains for sunlight protection in the spring.

The next big project will be painting the exterior of the Town House. We are raising funds towards that project at this time. Donations, town support, and our fundraising efforts will work towards accomplishing the project.

Memorial Flags

Prescott Memorial's sixth grade helped place the American flags on veterans' graves in the Maple Grove Cemetery this year prior to Memorial Day.

Under the guidance of Don Grinnell, the students were challenged to find the graves, read the names, and place the flags in the holders at the grave sites. Don explained the difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day. He shared that the town places flags on all known veterans' graves in all of the town's cemeteries.

Annual WHS Heritage Day!

Join the Washington Historical Society as we recognize Washington native

Richard C. Moore

Hear the story of how a young Washington man started with a single truck which eventually became one of the largest trucking companies on the East Coast.

**Saturday, September 9th
10 a.m. at the "Old Town Hall"**



Bakers Needed

Bakers needed for our PIE BAKING CONTEST. Pies need to be dropped off between 9 and 9:30 at the Town House.

Judging for the "Best Pie" will take place at 9:30. The winner will receive \$50 to Hannaford! Slices will be for sale after the R.C. Moore program as a fund raiser for the WHS.

Postal Patron

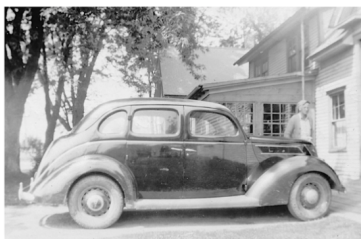
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W H E E L S T H R O U G H T H E Y E A R S



2024 Calendar

2024 Washington Historical Society Calendar

Our fund raising calendar is now available for \$10 at Gibbs Library, Washington General, Linscott's, Blueberry Fields, and at our events. The theme is "Wheels Through the Years." Pictures feature busses, fire trucks, tractors, wagons and even an antique hearse.