



# Members Quarterly Newsletter

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Pittfield Historical Society  
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**Pittsfield, New Hampshire – The Gem of the Suncook Valley**  
Martha Moloy and Bill Provençal, co-editors

## The Life and Times of Cpl. Charles O. Durgin, 12<sup>th</sup> NH Regiment, Company F



The Historical Society was fortunate to once again have Tim Paterson, local Civil War historian, talk about the Life and

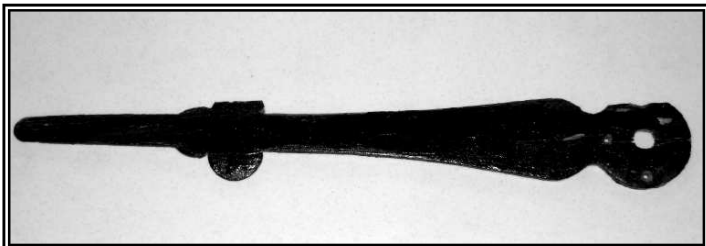
Times of Cpl. Charles O. Durgin, how he came to know Cpl. Durgin and the fact that he currently lives in the former Durgin residence.

Tim referred to Durgin as a hero. He was raised in Pittsfield and after the war, returned. Durgin enlisted in the army on August 22, 1862, in a 3-year unit. He was a member of Company F, which was made up of Pittsfield volunteers, and participated in every engagement except Gettysburg.

At the end of 1863, he was involved in a special night raid into Virginia, unusual because night raids were not conducted during the Civil War. He was wounded by a mini ball at the Battle of Cold Harbor in Virginia. In 1865 he was mustered out of the army and returned to Pittsfield. In 1871, he built a house on Catamount Street and resided there for a few years, eventually moving to Berwick, Maine.

## Town Clock

The Town of Pittsfield recently has given the Society a



clock hand removed from the Town Clock. It is warped and kept hitting the other hand, thereby stopping that side of the clock.

## Black Idol (possibly Incan or Mayan)



This mysterious black onyx idol was deposited on the front steps of the Historical Society. We have no idea where it came from.

Perhaps someone has placed a curse on the Society in the form of this Black Idol! Any information would be appreciated.

## September 2009 Raffle Winners

- Afghan – Kathy Therrien
- \$50.00 cash - Aaron Duarte, Amherst, NH
- \$75.00 cash – Bernadete Cameron, Deerfield, NH
- \$75.00 cash – Diane/Dick Burley, GIW, NH
- \$100.00 cash – Bill Reichert, Rochester, NH

## Help Wanted

We are looking for a volunteer for Tuesday mornings to input data from newspapers and scrapbooks using a PC. We will train you for what is required. Please contact Bill Provençal at 435-8603.

## When It Began

Telegraph service to Pittsfield began in November, 1868. The line followed the highway from Suncook to Concord

to an office in G. W. Batchelders Jewelry Store, one building below the Washington House Hotel. When Mr. Batchelder died in March 1869 the office was moved into the Thorndike Block, where the present Union Block building is located. It did a thriving business almost immediately. In November 1887, new poles were set along the Suncook Valley Railroad line.

(*The Suncook Valley Times*, October 15 and 22, November 5 and 26, 1868; January 14m 1869 and November 11, 1887)

## Memories of the Washington House

Boston Celtics star Bob Cousy, Gilmanton's author Grace Metallious, and the wife of poet Robert Frost were among the visitors who graced the halls of the historic Washington House many years ago, according to Therese Riel, who helped run the family hotel for 20 years. Mrs. Riel was guest speaker at the November meeting of the Pittsfield Historical Society, and offered some historical and amusing anecdotes about the building that her parents, Raoul and Yvonne Drouin, purchased in 1952 from Homer Cotton.

The hotel had a dining room, cocktail lounge, banquet room and a large apartment where the Drouins lived. There were 40 guest rooms, some large enough to accommodate 4 double beds; some rooms had floor boards that measured 32 inches wide and 28 feet long. The only items sent out to be laundered were the linens; Mrs. Riel did all of the washing for the resident guests, towels, barcloths, tablecloths, etc. She did all of the supply ordering and all of the bookkeeping.

Many of their out-of-town guests were the owners, bosses and employees of the several shoe shops in town, as well.

Among the workers at the hotel were men who faced a winter when construction jobs were slow, or those who just offered to "give us a free hand": Harvey, Mickey and Ernest Locke, Brush Riel, Mrs. Riel's brother, Paul, Ann Emerson, Baldi Blatner, Min Genest, Jake Nerbonne, Bill Meyers, Maurice Chagnon, Harry Whitcomb, Albert Ordway. "Whoever came downstairs and wanted a drink as the tannery, Globe Mfg., the weaving factory and Watson's Lumber. Often they would stay at the hotel from Monday thru Friday noon upstairs would have to carry a case of beer upstairs. Normy Plant and Terry Chagnon were always willing," she said.

## Lyman Park Put to Bed

It was a rainy Saturday for the Fall Cleanup, however seven society members braved the dreary weather to clean up the leaves and flower beds. Thanks to Mark and Sylvia Wallace, Ray and Judy Webber, Fuzz Freese, Dave McGhee and Harry Vogt for their efforts in preparing the park for it's winter nap.

## Upcoming Programs

Mar. 18 – Hall of Fame Induction of Warren Chase  
April 8 – Past and Future of Carpenter Library  
May 13 – School Days, The Early Schools & Pittsfield Academy  
June 10 – WWII Veterans Program  
October 14 – Local Artist Gene Matras  
November 11 – Covered Bridges in NH



