



# Pages in Time



Individual Supporters:  
Lyn & Joe Rowden, Fairfield

## Historic buildings of Norridgewock

This week we have two Norridgewock contributors writing on historic buildings in their hometown.

### The Richards House

by Kim Marie Richards

This Federal/Greek revival 1816 home at 22 Waterville Road (Rte. 139) in Norridgewock, was built to serve a purpose. Its purpose has changed over time, but the people are much the same. They all wanted a place to live, rest, work and make ever-



For over 101 years of its 194, the Richards family has lived in this house on Waterville Road in Norridgewock, now home to the Hillside Tea Room, run by Kim Richards. Photo by Kim Richards

lasting memories with their families and friends.

It began with a young Calvin Heald, in 1816, building this home utilizing the old family saw mill just below the hill on the mill-stream. While using the lumber from his own business he made sure the house was solid by using granite from Norridgewock's own granite quarry on Dodlin Mountain for the foundation.

For 101 years this house has had my husband's family living in it, and before that many others gave it a life and a personality of

its own. Many citizens of Norridgewock from sawmill owners, a jeweler, a doctor, teachers, farmers, and even ministers have called this old house "home."

This house has been able to endure the weather of Maine, the wear and tear of children's feet running about, and the many physical changes its owners have put upon it through time. There are still fireplaces original to the home. When we were taking down walls put up to divide rooms, we discovered lovely mouldings around one door

opening. Feeling it had to have a match, we tore through the other side, discovered the twin, and restored the room.

This house was certainly built to last so that all of the wonderful people that have inhabited it would be warm and safe to enjoy their loved ones. It will continue to wrap itself around our family throughout our lives and those of our three daughters, Heather, Kelsey, Shannon - and hopefully grandchildren some day!

My husband, Nathan, and I invite you to be part of this cycle of family and friends, and join us for a cup of tea or coffee. In this

house we run The Hillside Coffee and Tea Room in rooms decorated with photos and memorabilia, left largely undisturbed, from the families that inhabited this space. The classic brown with ivory shutters gives it a pleasant look with natural landscaping. Plans to have picnic tables are in the making. Wireless Internet is also available. The hours are 7 am - 2 pm Tuesday through Friday. There are baked goods for your liking, a soup of the day with a sandwich of the day, and dynamites are always available. Everything is homemade and the atmosphere speaks for itself. My family and I welcome you to come and spend time with us.

The idea of a coffee and tea house never crossed my mind until my middle daughter, Kelsey, was given a math word problem, concerning how much an individual might spend on a cup of coffee in a year. Research by my daughter was also done on how much it would cost a company to actually make a cup of coffee to see the profit from it. In the past, my husband, Reverend Nathan Richards, and I thought of having a bed and breakfast, but that consisted of a lot of hoops to jump through; plus the fact that it would tie us down from having much of a life. So it was decided - a coffee and tea room, where we, and others in the community, could come and enjoy our beautiful home, have a coffee or tea, and most importantly - relax!

### Norridgewock Grange Hall

by Lucille Greer

Farmers around here used to meet in clubs to discuss agriculture and household problems. Men and women at that time met separately and it was a social time as well as an opportunity to

discuss matters of concern. Club memberships declined after the Civil War until in 1867 the first Grange (officially Patrons of Husbandry) was organized nationally. It reached Maine in 1873. A year later there were 64

located. This has been the Grange Hall ever since.

Their original building on Main Street was used as a school for almost 30 years, and with additions, becoming the



Before becoming Somerset Grange #18, this building was, as depicted in this circa 1880 stereograph card, the Eaton Family and Day School, in Norridgewock. Internet photo

chapters in our state with 2000 members. The 18th one to be organized was our own Somerset Chapter. That is not exclusive to Somerset County, though that is the name, as there are others granges in Smithfield, Anson, Canaan, East Madison and elsewhere in our county.

In the beginning of our local organization, members met in various buildings around town. In 1906 they built a hall on Main Street where Skowhegan Savings Bank is now located. In 1916 they swapped this building with the town for the old Eaton School building at Peet's Corner where our one traffic light is

Norridgewock Consolidated School for all grades. It was very sad for the townspeople when it burned in 1945. Those of us who graduated from this school feel we had the best education ever. What we lacked in equipment (no typewriters for a business course, minimum lab equipment, etc) was more than made up for by the individual attention and encouragement of the teachers we had.

The Eaton School, where the grange went when they exchanged buildings, was organized by Hamlin F. Eaton in 1856 and incorporated in 1874 "...for the promotion of literature, science and morality." Its Second Empire building, designed by architect Charles F. Douglas of Lewiston in 1916, became Somerset Grange #18. In 1988, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Seeking histories on American Legion and VFW posts

by Lyn Rowden

In our special feature, "Pages in Time," we focus each week on an aspect of local history. I am looking for brief histories of the various American and VFW Posts in our area, which I would like to feature in May.

A small piece of about 250 words would be wonderful. No worries about "perfect" writing and editing, we will take care of that for you. An old photo, if available may be sent in jpeg format or mailed or brought in to the paper for scanning. You will get your photo back as long as you include your address.

Please send me your information along with a reliable method of contacting you, by email to townline@fairpoint.net or mail to P. O. Box 89 Jonesbrook Crossing, South China, ME 04358.

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