

INTRODUCTION

AUNT MOLLY'S SCRAP BOOK.

Mary Edna Hobbs was born on May 19, 1875, the child of Civil War Veteran and community leader Charles William Hobbs and his wife, Abbie Jane Sleeper. She was called Molly, perhaps in honor of Molly Hobbs, the first daughter born (August 22, 1754) to Pelham's first Congregational Minister, James Hobbs and his wife Elizabeth Batchelder. Mary Edna was a direct descendent of the Reverend James Hobbs.

In 1892, Molly, at age 18, became Pelham's first librarian. It was a small library located in a corner of the Great Meeting House, first occupied in 1795 and burned to the ground in 1906. Until 1842, the Great Meeting House built in the center of the "Meeting House Farm", on land purchased by my ancestor, John Ferguson, in 1738, and donated to the Town for a Common, in 1751, served as both Town Hall and Congregational Church. The great Meeting House was located where the Fire Station now (2009) stands.

In 1896, Molly's father led the effort to build Pelham's first library building. The library was built to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the 1746 incorporation of the Town of Pelham. It was designed by Frederick Stickney, of the then famous architectural firm of Stickney and Austin. Stickney's father had been born in Pelham and his sister Jenny was then a teacher in Pelham. In 1875, ten years after the end of the Civil War, Stickney was an architecture student at MIT. In that year he entered a contest which challenged the MIT students to design a small town library, which would also serve as a memorial to Civil War Veteran's. Stickney's design won the competition.

Pelham's first library building, designed by Stickney, is a minor variation of the original award winning design. The buildings architecture and history has earned it a place on the State Register of Historic Buildings. We are in the process of having it placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings for the same reasons.

Sometime between 1892 and 1896, Molly, who, over time became known as Aunt Molly to all library patrons, began a large scrap book. She began by pasting articles and other materials that predated 1892. For 65 years, probably with help from her college teaching younger sister, Aunt Kina (Carrie Frances Hobbs), she pasted newspaper articles describing Pelham events that occurred from before 1892 until August 1958. One of the last articles pasted in the scrapbook described my June 1958 graduation from Kimball Union Academy and admission to Dartmouth College. The article was similar to a 1902 article describing her younger brother Sam's graduation from Pinkerton Academy and admission to Dartmouth College.

For 65 years the great Scrap Book was left on a large table, available for all library patrons to peruse. Over time it yellowed and became tattered, suffering the indignities of thousands of wet finger tips and spilled drinks. On occasion, Aunt Molly would use too much paste, which would show through the article.

By August of 1958 the scrap book was yellowed and tattered-its binding had failed. Aunt Molly realized that continued public viewing would bring an end to her 65 year effort. She took the scrap book home, when she retired in August of 1958.

Upon her death, the scrap book passed onto Aunt Kina. Aunt Kina passed the book on to the President of the Pelham Historical Society, Carrolyn Law. She kept the scrapbook for nearly 20 years, before she passed it on to this writer. I have had the original for perhaps 15 years.

What to do. I determined that the pages were too big to photocopy. Later I determined that the pages were too large to scan into my computer. Eventually I became adequate at scanning single contemporary newspaper articles into my computer. I acquired a computer program that allowed me to isolate individual articles, darken the print, lighten the background and remove wrinkles and stains.

It became obvious that the only way to make Aunt Molly's scrap book available to the public, was to scan individual articles and to isolate the article by erasing the portions of the other articles that appeared around the targeted article. This meant that portions of some pages had to be scanned four or five times, because more than one article appeared on each page. Once isolated, each article had to be cleaned up, using the latest in computer software. Print was darkened. Yellow backgrounds, tears, paste and drink stains were removed. It was an imperfect endeavor, but most of the resulting articles can be read. The process took over a year.

Once the articles were isolated and restored, Karen and I were faced with the problem of indexing the articles for retrieval by the reader. The articles contained thousands of Pelham names. I handed Karen a memory stick containing all of the articles. It took Karen more than six months to come up with an indexing system.

It is with a great deal of pride, accomplishment, and relief that Karen and I present to the readers of the Hayes-Genoter History and Genealogy Library, all of the articles contained in Aunt Molly's Scrap Book. Enjoy.

DATING THE ARTICLES

Aunt Molly failed to place a date on the articles that she included in her scrapbook. Sometimes the content provides a hint as to when the article was written. With respect to some articles, I have estimated a date based on my knowledge of Pelham History. A third way to date the time frame of an article is to look to see if the Congregational Minister is mentioned in the article. The Minister was a central figure in Pelham Society between 1892 and 1958 and attended many functions. I have listed the ministers and their tenures at the end of this section.

The date of articles relating to births, marriages, and deaths can often be determined by turning to the genealogical sections of the Hayes-Genoter Library.

Congregational Ministers serving during the 65 years of Aunt Molly's tenure as librarian:

1861-1904	Rev. Augustus Berry
1899-1904	Rev. Charles Merriam
1904-1910	Rev. Joseph Hoyle
1911-1915	Rev. Cyrus W. Allen
1916-1922	Rev. Milton McCallister
1924-1927	Rev. Frank Noyes
1927-1929	Rev. Duane Thistlewaite
1929-1933	Rev. Claude Adams
1933-1935	Rev. Norman Davis
1935-1939	Rev. Herbert Gale
1939-1940	Rev. Robert Blyer
1940-1943	Rev. Ralph Hoffman
1943-1946	Rev. George Williams
1946-1950	Rev. Thomas Roden
1950-1953	Rev. Albert Sunberg
1953-1957	Rev. Alva Taylor
1957-1962	Rev. James Kydd