

~ FREMONT IN REVIEW ~

**Report of the Town Historian**

**An Historical Record of Fremont Events During the Year 2014**

2014 was a major milestone year for our small town. This was the year that Fremont - formerly called Poplin - proudly celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as an incorporated New Hampshire town when then Provincial Governor Benning Wentworth signed the Act of Incorporation on Friday, June 22, 1764. The name was later changed from Poplin to Fremont on July 8, 1854 in honor of John C. Fremont - the great American West Explorer during the 1840's & 1850's, and FIRST Republican Candidate for President of the United States.

The year got off to a very cold and snowy start. New Year's Eve was frigid cold! That weather escalated into a frigid cold snowstorm that dropped 9 inches of snow with much drifting on January 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Television media were calling it the "Monster Snowstorm" because it was worse in other parts of the country. Many townspeople experienced frozen water pipes, school was closed due to slippery roads. Fortunately the electrical power did not fail in town as that would have exacerbated an extremely difficult weather situation. The frigid cold continued right on into the weekend causing all kinds of accidents, frozen pipes, and sometimes house fires throughout the region. The Midwest had it much worse than the Northeast with temperatures dropping in Minnesota to 51 degrees below zero and reaching as far south as Georgia with temps dipping below zero that far South. An unfortunate 12-year-old East Kingston girl stuck her tongue on a flagpole during this frigid cold spell and had to wait 15 long minutes before her parents discovered her and could help her. The young girl said "she wasn't sure what she was thinking when she did it." The rest of the winter was extremely cold with several more frigid cold spells and considerable snow making it one of, if not the most intolerable winter many could ever remember in Fremont...even surpassing the tough and burdensome Winter of 2010 & 2011 when people had to repeatedly shovel off snow from their rooftops to prevent cave-ins which happened all across New Hampshire that winter.

Despite Fremont celebrating its 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which provided many happy and enjoyable moments, the year ironically was also one of rare and considerable tragedy. On Town Election Day - March 11<sup>th</sup> a 25 year-old young lady tragically took her own life by hanging herself from the Black Rocks Bridge - a.k.a. Sandown Road Bridge in Fremont Village. The bridge was festooned for much of the year with bandana's, flowers, and balloons placed there by her many friends & relatives. On May 17<sup>th</sup> Kimberly A. Smith aged 25 from Hampstead, NH was seriously injured when her car hit a tree on Danville Road just a few feet south of Hooke Road. She died from her injuries on May 26<sup>th</sup>. This was the first fatal vehicle accident in Fremont since December 2007. On August 2nd a young 18 year-old Fremonter sadly took his own life on Tavern Road and was genuinely missed by his many friends, family, and co-workers. The celebratory year was also sadly marred by the very tragic murder-suicide that took place on October 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> when Michael Porter, 51, strangled his girlfriend Mary Lucas, 52 in her apartment in Fremont Village. Porter later took his own life by gunshot in the woods at the end of Jacob's Cove Road off Sandown Road on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Mary was a popular, cheerful store

clerk at nearby Liberty Square Market. She left behind 3 grown children. Regional television & newspaper media descended upon the town and reported the tragedy in news outlets nationwide. Much of the news media was astounded to learn that the town had never had a homicide in its 250-plus years of history. Sadly this tragic event put an unfortunate end to Fremont's enviable record of never having had a murder within its boundaries dating back to the 1720's & 1730's when the Town was first settled as part of Exeter. Fremont was the LAST town out of 37 communities in Rockingham County to never have had a murder. Unfortunately the Town did have a murderer in the form of 37 year-old Steven Roy who murdered his children's nanny Joanna Kozak on June 27, 1992 in a gruesome, violent manner in a remote cemetery in nearby Raymond. Roy is currently serving a life sentence without parole at the NH State Prison in Concord. A Memorial Bench for Mary Lucas will be placed at the Fremont Memorial Ball-Fields in the near future.

During town Election Day on March 11 - voters voted down Warrant Article 22 to rescind SB2 by a vote of 673 to 203. Nicole Cloutier was elected Town Clerk /Tax Collector to succeed incumbent Town Clerk/Tax Collector Sharon Girardi who stepped down to run for Town Selectwoman. Voters approved \$5,000 to expend on Fremont's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. In April Michael DiCroce became a Republican candidate for Rockingham County Attorney. This was his second attempt and he failed to win the top vote during a crowded Republican field of contestants during the September Primary Election.

May 18<sup>th</sup> - Patriotic red-white & blue bunting was placed upon various town buildings as part of the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration in 2014.



Town Administrator Heidi Carlson was honored with a small reception for her 20 years of dedicated service to the Town of Fremont. Heidi has served this community with an extraordinary and admirably strong, knowledgeable work ethic.

May - A sitting bench in memory of local resident & Fremont Garden Club Officer Aja Mahoney (who died June 20, 2013) was placed in front of the Fremont Historical Museum by her friends and fellow Garden Club members.

Former resident Lloyd Metevier Jr of Exeter created a Website titled: ***Fremont Kids Grown Up*** that allows past & present Fremonters a chance to share their thoughts, experiences, and recollections of living in Fremont. It has over 400 members and has become a huge hit. It is a delightful way to educate readers about people, places, & events in Fremont through the years. The Town celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in June with thousands of residents and out-of-towners attending the various celebratory events. Miss Amanda Arsenault was crowned MISS FREMONT 2014 by former MISS FREMONT 1964 Jane Turner LaBelle on June 15<sup>th</sup>. She made

the Town very proud by performing her duties with exceptional grace, dignity, and professionalism throughout the remainder of the year.

**For a detailed account of the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration please see the Fremont 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Report elsewhere in this Town Report.**

Over 4,500 people attended the celebration which consisted of a huge Field Day Celebration, Miss Fremont Scholarship Pageant, Antique Car/Truck Show, Old Fashioned 1864 Baseball Games, Hot Air Balloon Rides, Concerts, Fireworks Extravaganza, RC Model Plane Exhibition, 60 Food & Craft Vendors, 5K Road Race, and much more. It was a celebration to remember thanks to the hard work of numerous 250<sup>th</sup> Committee members & community volunteers.

A large portion of the new burial section on the west side of the Knowles-Chase-Carr-Leavitt Cemetery on Leavitt Road was cleared, loamed and seeded in September.

On October 6 Fremont resident Gary Babineau, aged 50, became an unfortunate fatality in a head-on collision on Route 9 in Barrington, NH. He left behind a devoted family and many friends.

Much to the relief of countless Fremonters, Beede Road was finally repaved from Main Street (Rte. 107) to just past the **Woodman Causeway** a.k.a the **Sunken Cassey** located just south of Fellows Hill near the corner of Beede & North Roads. The condition of this vital road had deteriorated to such a point over the past several years that drivers had to dodge pot holes, ruts, and practically needed to “drive an army tank” to traverse over this road. Several large trees were cut along side parts of Beede Road to allow more sunshine in to help melt snow & ice in the winter time.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual NH Grass Drags & Water Crossing Competition took place over Columbus Day Weekend on Peterson’s Fields on Martin Road. It attracted 45,000 spectators. This event has been going on since 1985 despite a three year gap when the FIRST Grass Drags Competition were held here in 1982.

The **Historic ca. 1756 John Prescott Lovering Inn / 1774-1789 Captain Nathan Brown Tavern/ 1872-1906 True’s Hotel** at 272 Main Street in Fremont Village which is currently owned by the Turner Family was put up For Sale in October. It has been in the family since 1946 and is the second most historic landmark in Fremont only after the 1800 Meeting House. The very first Poplin/Fremont Town Meeting was held here on August 27, 1764 shortly after the Town was Incorporated. Famous United States Senator Daniel Webster stayed at this Inn/Stagecoach Stop in 1840 and gave a speech promoting William Henry Harrison for President that year. Many historic social & political events took place here including several town meetings, Revolutionary War meetings, hunting party dinners, post office site, stagecoach stop, and political club meetings. The Town Cannon was fired off by the Democrats in front of this Republican Hotel in 1874 blowing out many panes of window glass. Hopefully this historic old Fremont landmark will be purchased by owners willing to restore and preserve its rich heritage.

It is one of only 14 homes still standing in Fremont built before the Town was incorporated in 1764.

On October 30<sup>th</sup> A Dedication ceremony took place at the newly remodeled Fremont Highway Shed on Danville Road (Route 111A). The former Salt & Sand Building was built in 2001 and remodeled by closing in the two front bay areas with bay doors and fitted up with lighting, restroom, vehicle repair bays, and a small office.



An informative metal Historic Marker detailing the **History of Fremont** on one side and the **History of Black Rocks Village** on the other, was erected in front of the Town Hall on November 7<sup>th</sup>. It is a dark Navy Blue sign with ivory writing similar in appearance to the five NH State Historical Markers that line Main Street (Rte. 107) in Fremont.

Fremont Librarian Bethany Brace resigned her post on November 20<sup>th</sup> after serving in the position for three years. She was the first non-Fremonter to hold the 120 year-old position coming from East Kingston, NH.

Mary Anderson retired as Headmaster of Pinkerton Academy in 2014 after an impressive and productive 11 years of holding that position. She has worked a total of 39-years at Pinkerton as a teacher and former Assistant Headmaster, and most recently served on the Anniversary Committee for Pinkerton Academy's 1814-2014 BiCentennial Observance.

Summer was mild and pleasant this year while autumn in Fremont and the remainder of the state was especially colorful this year...very vibrant colors and

A Thanksgiving Eve Nor-Easter took place on Wednesday, November 26 leaving 7 to 9 inches of wet heavy snow in Fremont causing power outages all over the state lasting into the weekend. Many trees and branches fell upon power lines taking down wires. Power went out in Fremont around 7:30 pm on Wednesday and didn't come back on in various parts of town until Friday or Saturday. This upstaged many Thanksgiving Day dinners for countless townspeople. This power outage became the FOURTH largest power outage in New Hampshire history.

On Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup> the first annual Fremont Police Department Awards Ceremony took place at the Ellis School Gymnasium with 200 people in attendance. Several awards were presented to various members of the Fremont Police Department, past & present for select accomplishments or outstanding heroism. Police Officer Derek Franek was bestowed the highest award for heroism displayed on May 12, 2014 at 46 Mill Pond Road in Brentwood during a domestic disturbance that turned deadly when Brentwood Police Officer Steve Arkell, aged 48, was ambushed from an elevated position inside the house and was killed by 47 year-

old Michael Nolan. Franek who entered the house shortly afterwards to lend Arkell back-up support also came under heavy fire by the gunman but managed to escape out the back of the house noting along the way that Arkell was fatally shot. Once outside behind cover, Franek then radioed Fremont Police Chief Jon Twiss telling him to warn other approaching police officers not enter the building as they too could possibly be ambushed and killed by the shooter. By doing so Franek possibly saved several lives as the killer also set fires inside the house causing a massive explosion that killed the assailant and destroyed much of the house. Chief Jon Twiss was also honored and awarded for his bravery and coolness during the Brentwood tragedy.

A special THANK YOU to all Fremont Officers who so bravely protect our community and risk harm in order to maintain order and public safety.

The *Beauty Salon & Spa* opened at 13 Rogers Road in 2014, as did the *Fremont Farmstand* also on Roger's Road. The Cooperage Trail was opened for nature lovers to hike between Spaulding Road & Beede Road. Information Kiosks were built at both ends of the trail.

Again a word of thanks and appreciation to the members of the Fremont Garden Club that so diligently maintain flower gardens and decorate town buildings with Spring, Autumn & Christmas decorations.

**Fremont lost several outstanding native residents during the 250<sup>th</sup> milestone anniversary year of 2014.**

**Barbara (George) Bean** died April 27 aged 94 years. She was a delightful Fremont native who was active in the community as a former teacher, and an active member in the People's United Methodist Church. Barbara was a kind, unselfish, hardworking, and devoted to friend and family. Her roots in Fremont date back into the 1770's on the Hooke side of the family.

**Jean (French) Ragonese** died July 16 aged 88. She was a 35-year member & Treasurer of the Fremont Historical Society, served on the Open Space Committee, Master Plan Committee, and revived the Memorial Day Town Dinners dating back to 1979. Jean was another proud, hardworking, individualistic "Yankee" who loved the town and the role her family played through the centuries in helping to make it the fine town that it is today. Jean's family roots in Fremont date back to the 1750's through the Robinson, Follett, Norris, French, & Todd lines.

**Alberta (Peterson) Schreiber** died June 7, aged 86. She and her husband ran dairy farms in Fremont & Plaistow, and later owned and operated school buses for the Fremont School District for many years. She was very active and devoted member the People's United Methodist Church. Her roots in town date back to 1803 through the Martin, Cole, & Peterson Families.

**Bernice (Rand) Turner** died January 1 aged 92. She was a very devoted mother to three daughters and a former postal clerk & letter carrier in Fremont for many years. She was very

active in the Fremont Grange and People's United Methodist Church. The Rand Family dates back in Fremont to the 1880's, but further back into the 1790s via the West Family line.

**Joseph "Brodie" Bolduc, Jr.** died December 25 aged 69. "Brodie" was a lifelong resident of Fremont and a very highly respected professional logger who won many awards for his outstanding forestry skills from the Society of American Forester. He also made Fremont very proud by winning numerous woodsman competitions over the past several decades, especially at the Deerfield & Stratham Fairs. The Bolduc ancestry dates back in Fremont to the 1750's & 1790's through the Burleigh, Holmes, West, and Robinson lines. Brodie was a devoted family man and an exceptional friend and neighbor who served Fremont in many worthy capacities over the past 50 years.

**Phyllis (Light) Turner** died December 17, aged 90. Though not a native of Fremont she married into the Turner Family which dates back to the 1930's in Fremont. Phyllis and her late husband Henry bought in 1946 the old **circa 1756 John Prescott Lovering Inn (also known as the Captain Nathan Brown Tavern 1774-1789)** in Fremont Village. Her home was the site of the very first Poplin/Fremont Town Meeting in 1764 and it was somewhat ironic that this venerable lady passed away 250 years after her adopted hometown was incorporated. Phyllis worked many years as a lunch cook at the Ellis School and was as much an old fashioned Yankee woman as one could ever find in New England... determined, hardworking, self-sufficient, stubborn, frugal, devoted, and very kind. Her large circle of friends and family will greatly miss her.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew E. Thomas  
Town Historian



Photos courtesy of Heidi Carlson and Bob Meade