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**EXETER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 141  
EXETER, ME 04435-0141**

**NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2000  
VOL. 1, NO. 1**

**MEMBERSHIP FEES:  
SINGLE - \$8 / FAMILY - \$12  
DUE OCT.1ST ANNUALLY  
TEL. 285-7903 OR 379-3190**

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Well, we finally formed a new historical society in Exeter.

Our first meeting was held on August 17th at the town office. Those present were: Bob Wetzler, Sr., Dorrice Wetzler, Kathy Carlow, Doris Larrabee, Deanna Wetzler, Nancy Agnew, James Leavitt, and Stewart Bean.

This was an informational and organizational meeting. Discussed was the election of officers, membership dues, fundraisers, group projects, incorporation as a non-profit organization, and by-laws. It was suggested that we get a post office box at the Exeter Post Office, and open a bank account at Barco Federal Credit Union in Corinth.

Our second meeting was held on September 11th at the town office. We discussed possible buildings for a museum, and town history. Present at this meeting were: James Leavitt, Nancy Agnew, Debbie Christo, Deanna Wetzler, and Stewart Bean.

This newsletter will be published every other month and sent to all members. Page one will normally have information about the society. Page two will be short historical stories, often times with pictures. This is our first newsletter, so bear with us if you see any mistakes, and we will try to make it better each time.

We ran a table at Exeter Harvest Day on September 30th, from 9 AM - 3 PM. The table was very busy all day with dozens of people looking through the old photos, maps, historical documents, and newspaper clippings.

Donations were given to the society by: **Lewis Leavitt of Exeter; Mabel Hawes of Exeter; and Dorrice Wetzler, of Bangor.** We also have one more donation to pick up from **Faith Richards of Garland.**

New members: **Mr. & Mrs. Lee White, Sr., Wayne & Sue Day, and Ronald & Nancy Agnew, all of Exeter; and Stewart Bean of Corinth.**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, November 13th, at 6 P.M. at the Exeter Town Office.

## BUILDINGS DEMOLISHED

It is sad news to report that two buildings will have vanished from the town's landscape by the end of this year. The Chamberlain Meetinghouse was demolished earlier this year. It was built in the early 1800's, and served as a religious sanctuary up into the 1970's. The belltower was salvaged by a local resident, and will be restored. The bell was sold several years ago and now hangs in a cupola on a barn in Stetson. This church was located at the intersection of Chamberlain Meetinghouse Road and Matteson Road.

The Exeter Mills Hall, more commonly known as the Exeter Grange Hall, is currently being demolished (photo). The Exeter Preservation Society gave permission to the historical society to salvage any items of interest from the hall for preservation. These items were removed and are being safely stored, thanks to **James & Julie Leavitt of Exeter**. The hall was built in the summer of 1876 through the efforts of the Exeter Mills Ladies Literary Society. It was dedicated on November 2nd of that year. It served as a community hall for any organization to use, from religious to civic. The land, lumber, & labor were all donated by town residents. It later became the permanent home of Exeter Grange No.86, P of H. This building is located in Exeter Mills Village.



## DID YOU KNOW?

\*In 1934, Exeter produced more potatoes than any other town in Maine, outside of Aroostook County?

\*Samuel Cony, elected Governor of Maine in 1864, started his career as an attorney with David Barker in a small law office across from the Exeter Store?

\*Exeter reached a peak population of 2,052 in 1840?

\*Mining operations were conducted in the southwest part of the town during the 1880's, and the iron ore was processed at the Exeter Iron Works in East Exeter Village?

\*The Exeter Cheese Factory produced 52,000 pounds of cheese per year?

\*Exeter High School was established in 1837, and reached it's peak in 1874-5 with an enrollment of 271, and the town hall had to be used to accommodate the overflow of students?