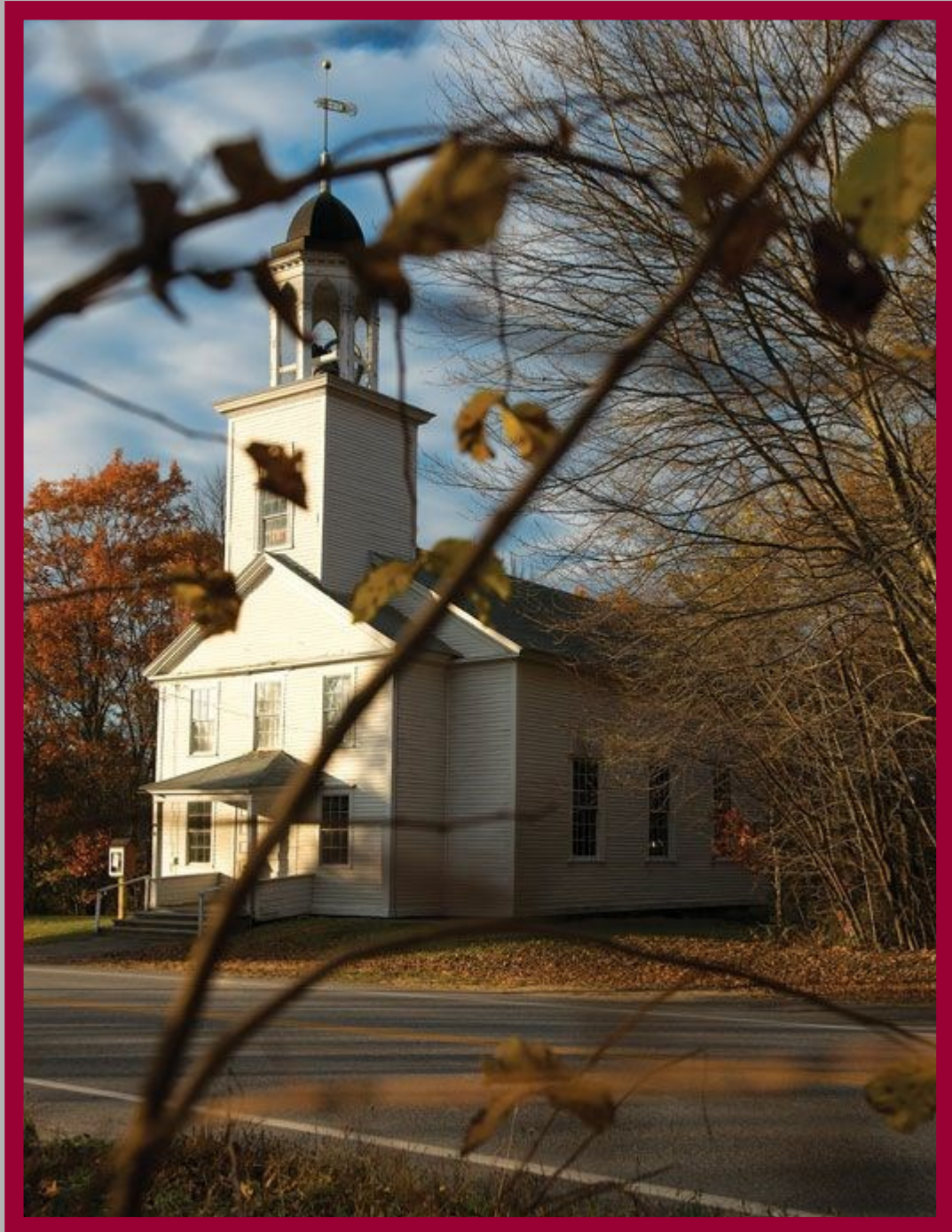


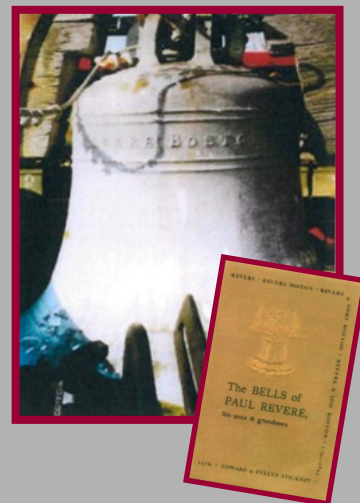
# Durham Historical Society's Intent of Use for the Union Church



*Provided to the Durham Selectboard on  
January 11, 2024*

The Durham Historical Society is committed to the continued use of the Union Church as a Historical Museum and research facility, as it has been since 1988.

In April of 1988, during the Annual Town Meeting, Article 91 was motioned by C. Foster and seconded by J. Moran to turn the responsibility for the operation and use of the Old Town Hall/ Union Church over to the Durham Historical Society. Since then, members of the society have worked tirelessly to help restore and renovate the historic church, including restoring the bell tower and Revere Bell. Historical artifacts and documents were then moved from Mae Parker's house to the Union Church, which started the Durham Historical Society Museum. Today, you can still view relics such as:



*Original copies of Everett Stackpole's book, "The History of Durham", 1899*

*Original maps of Royalsborough and Durham dated 1795 and 1833*

*Historical property deeds*

*Vintage school desks from Durham's one-room schoolhouses*

*The red velvet chairs that were saved from the "Little Brown Church" as it burned to the ground.*

*Victorian clothing from the Bliss Farm  
And much, much more!*



Prior to residing in the Union Church, Historical Society meetings would be held in former members' homes and Durham's historic artifacts sat in boxes. When the society was first formed in October of 1976, a report by Margaret Wentworth stated that there were a total of 47 members. Today, we have a total of 9 very active members and a handful of supporting members, who are dedicated to preserving the town's history all through their continued efforts of volunteering.

November 15, 1976

The Durham Historical Society met November 15, 1976 at the Durham Elementary School. The President called the meeting to order. The secretary's report was read and accepted. The treasurer's report was read and accepted. A report from Margaret Wentworth was read. We now have 35 regular members, 7 junior members, and 5 sustaining members for a total of 47.

*Left: an excerpt from the Durham Historical Society's minutes from November 15, 1976.*



Since the society was first formed, members have continuously raised money for the restoration of the Union Church, which were funded solely from local donations. On March 3rd, 1979, the Town of Durham created the Union Church Restoration fund by appropriating \$2,000 into an account to be designated for the restoration of the Union Church. Since then, the town has voted consistently to add money into this account for the use of restoration, bringing the total amount nearly to \$70,000.

**Durham, Saturday, Sept. 29: 19th and 20th Century Maine Quilt Exhibit, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Old Town Hall, 144 Royals Road**  
 The Durham Extension Club will meet at the historic Old Durham Town Hall at 11 a.m. Wednesday for a tour of the Durham Historical Society's exhibits. This will be open to the public. All are welcome. Those attending should bring a sandwich and sweater because the building won't be heated. Anyone with items for this column may contact Connie Footman at 353-2588.

**Society speaker**  
 DURHAM — The Durham Historical Society will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 14, at Union Church (old town hall), Route 136. The speaker, Dennis Stires of Livermore, authored "Pines and Livernore and Livernore and co-edited by Androscog and co-edited by Pines and Maxine Herling at 353-8190.

**Open house is last for season**  
 DURHAM — The Durham Historical Society will hold its last open day for the summer at the Town Hall/Town Office from 1 to 3 p.m. Aug. 17. Built in 1924, the building is a combination of the Baptist and Congregational churches. The Durham Historical Society houses the Durham Extension Club here from 1947 until 1924 to 1986.

**Community art show, bake sale**  
 DURHAM — The Durham Historical Society will hold its Community Art Show and Bake Sale to benefit the Restoration Fund for the Union Church, Sept. 30, at the Old Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. The church is open for the sale of books and baked goods will be available. A flea market will be held if the weather permits. Tables are available for \$5 each. Contact Rita Merrill at 353-2223 (weeknights after 3:30 p.m.) if interested in a table.

**Tables for rent**  
 DURHAM — The Durham Historical Society will hold a book and bake sale for the restoration fund from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 30, at the Union Church, 136 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The church is open for the sale of books and baked goods will be available. A flea market will be held if the weather permits. Tables are available for \$5 each. Contact Rita Merrill at 353-2223 (weeknights after 3:30 p.m.) if interested in a table.

During the years as tenants of the church, the society has hosted hundreds of events to entertain the town. From art and quilt shows, to bake sales, the doors of the church have always been open to the public so they can learn and enjoy history. Open houses have taken place in the church every 3rd Saturday during the warm spring, summer and fall months. Prior to the church being shuttered in 2023, These open houses occurred and will continue to occur for the public. Upon request, we will open outside of our normal operating hours.



*Pictures from the Annual Fundraiser, March 1996*

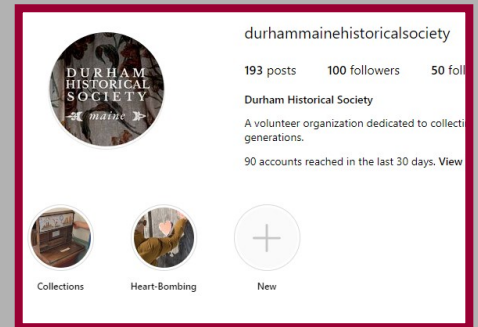


*Pictures from our 1st Annual Silent Auction, September 2023*





In 2014, a Facebook page was created to help keep the town of Durham and surrounding areas informed of Durham's vast history. For 10 years, posts have been shared daily with the community. In 2023 we launched an official webpage ([www.durhamhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.durhamhistoricalsociety.com)) and our first Instagram page.



As of 2023 we have a Chair, Secretary, Treasure and Archivist. We also have an event planning committee, which is in charge of fundraising events.



Society Members: Chair: Tia Wilson, Secretary: Lois Kilby-Chesley, Treasurer: Tyler Hutchison, Archivist: Emily Alexander  
 Participating Members: Candy DeCsipkes, Paula Purdy-Erdmann, Sandra Hilton, Natasha Skelton & Greg Wilson  
 Supporting Members: Erica Burke, Jesse Coplon, Christopher Staples, John & Betsey Talbot



On behalf of the entire Durham Historical Society, we are extremely excited to make this historic location our official home. We are prepared to raise funds through grant writing and fundraising, to ensure the building remains standing for the next 200 years. We are excited to continue to offer programs to the local schools and community to further educate them on the vast history Durham has to offer .



Above 3rd grade class from DCS on a historical bus trip through Durham where they did grave rubbings in 2023. Right: At the Methodist Church during our first historic bus tour of 2017



We believe, just as our founders did and just as the Durham residents believed long before the Historical Society existed, that our town's history belongs to the people.





# *A Look Inside the Durham Historical Society*



*A view looking down into the museum from the above loft.*



*Left: Small Queen Anne-style square window with colored glass, which is located within the one-hole outhouse at the front of the church. This is one of the only indoor church outhouse in the State of Maine.*

*Right: Post office box which was located in the Merrill Store at Methodist Corner in West Durham. The small water cooler was previously housed at the Eureka Grange #7.*







*Left: Junior Cider Mill (circa late 1800's), donated by the estate of Ruth Sylvester Benjamin*

*Right: Antique wooden hand crank washing machine (circa 1908) donated by John & Betsey Talbot from Bowie Hill Farms*







*Left: Veteran's Honor Roll Sign listing names of Veteran's in Durham. Dress was donated from the estate of Emma Bliss. Velvet chair rescued from the Little Brown Church that burned to the ground*

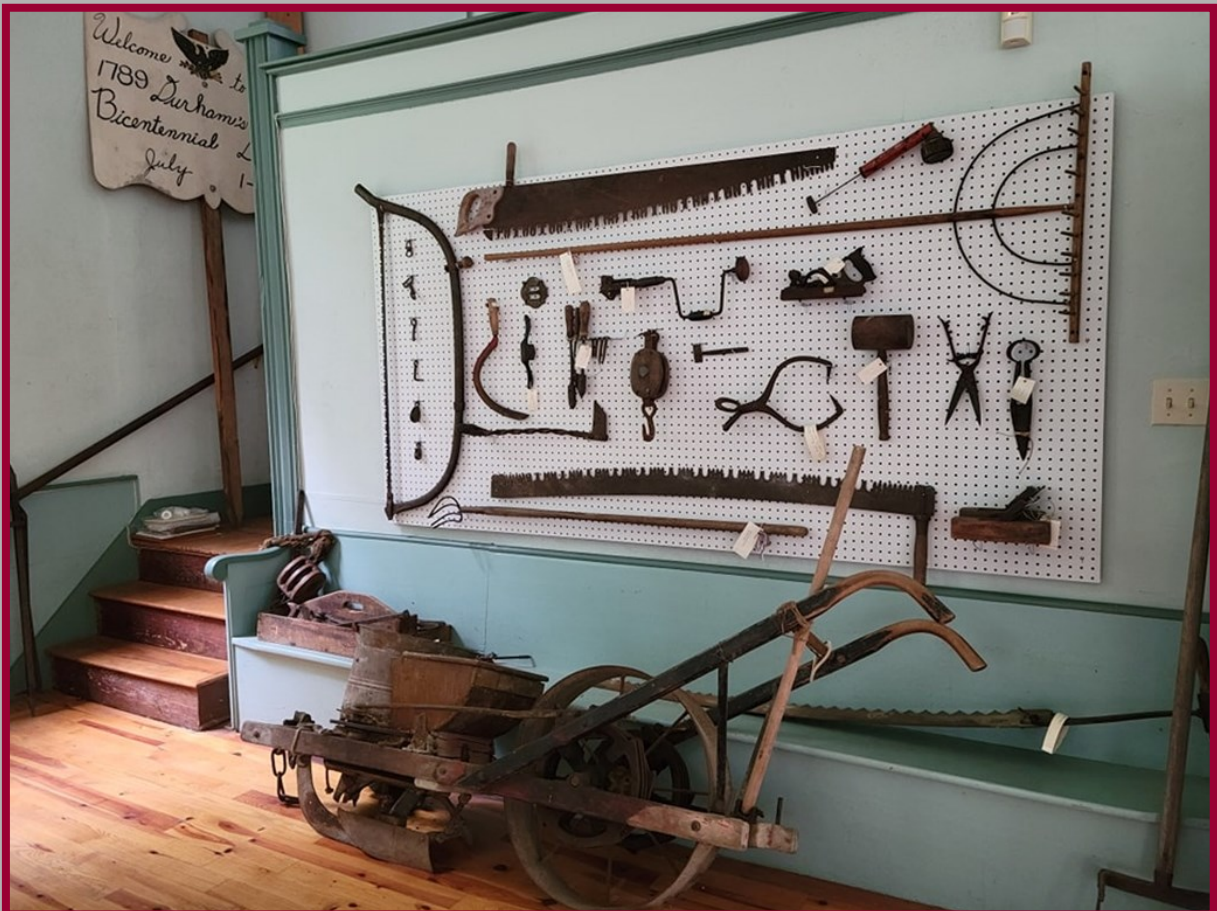
*Right: Two velvet chair rescued from the Little Brown Church that burned to the ground and donated by the Congregational Church of Durham.*







*Top: Name plaques of the cows that were milked at Bowie Hill Farm, as well as an old Shoe Cobbler bench from the mid 1800's. Below: Vintage tools and farm implements.*





## *Mission Statement, Durham Historical Society 24 March 1976*

*The purpose of the Durham Historical Society is to bring together those people interested in the history of our community.*

*The society will collect material which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the town: its settlement and development; its progress in population, education, agriculture, science and the arts. It will collect printed material such as histories, genealogies, biography, directories, pamphlets, programs, posters and circulars; manuscript material such as letters, diaries, journals, charts, surveys; and museum material such as pictures, photographs, paintings, portraits, and material objects illustrative of life, conditions, events and activities of past or the present.*

*The society will provide for the preservation of such material and for its accessibility, as far as may be feasible, to all who wish to examine or study it; cooperate with officials in ensuring the preservation and accessibility of the records and archives of the town and insure the preservation of historic buildings, monuments and markers.*

*The society will disseminate historical information by holding meetings with addresses, lectures, papers, and discussion; by marking historic buildings, sites, and trails; and by using the media of radio and the newspapers to awaken public interest.*

*The society will cooperate with the state historical society to collect and preserve materials of state-wide significance so that these materials can be made available to students and scholars.*