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Jack McAuliffe Recalls Early School Days in Wilmot

Moved cross-country in 1930

Lindy Heim
Wilmot Historical Society

The Wilmot Historical Society interviewed 90-year-old Jack McAuliffe in mid-September, learning more about what life was like in our area in the 1930s and 1940s than the Society's members knew beforehand, thanks to Jack's sharp memory and keen storytelling skills.

growing up in the area emerged, starting with Jack's 1930 move cross-country in a 1926 Nash when he was 6 years old. The family left Owensmouth, California, to settle on a Stearns Road farm in North Wilmot that his dad bought out of foreclosure.

After the purposely drawn-out trip of sightseeing and camping along the way, Jack was happy to begin his schooling at the White Pond School (North Wilmot School) at which nine students were enrolled, three of which were in

his first grade class. Liz Kirby, Jackie and Chuck Thompson, and I listened intently as Jack talked of his teacher, Annie Whittemore, who was Liz and Chuck's mother. She was only 20 years old at the time and fresh out of teaching school in Keene.

Younger kids "learned up" from the older kids, according to Jack, while Miss Whittemore traveled between kids, giving assignments in numerous subjects including general science, civics, geography, and penmanship. Games played at school included Blind Man's Bluff and Drop the Handkerchief.

He also talked of using crank telephones operating on shared lines that allowed everyone to hear conversations. Gossip was thrilling entertainment. Callers were easily identified by their combination of short and long cranks, the equivalent of our modern telephone numbers.

You, too, will be able to enjoy Jack's reminiscences later this fall when the Wilmot Historical Society hosts its annual meeting on Sunday, November 2, at the Wilmot Community Association's Red Barn.



Jack McAuliffe, 90, attended Andover High School in the '40s. Photo: Lindy Heim

Jack received his early education in country schoolhouses and high school in Andover with Walter Walker of Wilmot and Perley Ordway of East Andover, two friends with whom he still keeps in touch.

The recorded session and luncheon turned into a love-fest as details of

50 Years Ago from page 17

of Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Smith of South Danbury. Miss Prescott is a graduate of Franklin High School with the class of 1963 and is employed as office girl at Franklin Hospital. Mr. Smith graduated New London High School in 1963 and is employed at Benson Auto Shop in Franklin.

Teresa Lordon has electricity in her home now. The new line has been put in from part of Beech Hill beyond the covered bridge where Teresa lives. Three other homes are being built on the Lordon Homestead land and will have electricity, too. There has never been any electricity on that road, so it is

a thrill to them all.

At the primary election, Victor E. Phelps and John Maquire came in to tie for Representative for the Town of Andover. A drawing was held at the Secretary of State office in Concord recently, and Victor E. Phelps's name was drawn.

Congratulations go to Mr. and Mrs. James Minard on the birth of a son at the New London Hospital on October 24 named Darrell, weighing six pounds, seven ounces.

The Pink Panther is showing this week at the Regal in Franklin, starring David Niven, Peter Sellers, and Robert Wagner. "You only live once, so see *The Pink Panther* twice!"

Andover News, 24x7

Did you know that many of the articles in this issue have been available at AndoverBeacon.com for two or three weeks? Check the latest news at AndoverBeacon.com every day!