

# HISTORY, HERSTORY, OURSTORY

Tamworth History Center, January 2020

## WOMEN OF TAMWORTH

Over the centuries many women have been active in Tamworth, its community organizations, its growth and progress. We look forward to sharing these stories with you during our summer exhibit in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Suffrage Movement's success: the vote for women. In the 1790s the Mrs. Hidden and Eastman were instrumental, with their husbands, in starting the Social Library, only the second in the state. Parson Hidden advised every couple on equality in marriage at the hundreds of weddings he presided over, 1792-1837. But 100 years later a women's place was still an issue, as shown in an excerpt from Jean Ulitz's 1992 *Highlights of a Country Library*: "...At the Town Meeting of 1897 Mary J. Gilman was chosen Library Trustee by acclamation. The election of women to any position was an unusual, even startling, event." [although Mary Jane Gilman had been Tamworth's much-loved postmistress since 1869.] "Josiah Whittier, Secretary of the Board, wrote... We are pleased to note the good progress made in your town and the fact that a woman has been elected trustee furnishes an additional assurance that the forward movement will be kept up."

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## A RENOVATION STORY

In the course of our renovation of the c.1830 Hall-Dyer House, we've made several discoveries. One is a space of about 12" between the middle section and the back (north) part – the rooms now becoming the meeting room and office space. Unpainted clapboards show where the building once ended with an exterior north wall. Like so many New England farmhouses, "Squire Hall's" was once a version of the "Big house, little house, back house, barn" style, with sections added over time. This c. 1905 photo by Luther Shattuck, the only one we've found of the house before the 1960s, shows the configuration of that time. Shattuck's wide-angle lens slightly distorts the buildings, but the photo seems to confirm Georgia Drew Merrill's assertion (*History of Carroll County*, 1896) that Obed Hall liked farming better than lawyering, and also Charlotte Dyer's recalled story that her apartment in the back had once been used as a stable – or perhaps a milk room or woodshed, on the way to a wagon shed and barn. Come and see "the gap" – our renovation will preserve at least part of it!

## WONALANCET TRAGEDY IN 1923

Did you know the Chinook breed almost became extinct before it really even began? In 1923 a distemper outbreak ravaged Arthur Walden's Chinook Kennel. Many dogs died, including Walden's entire 1922 winning team at the 123 mile Eastern International Dog Derby in Berlin, NH, except for Chinook himself. It took two years for Walden to rebuild a "young but promising team of Chinook sons" to race again. The rest, as they say, is history....

**COME TO THC FOR CHINOOK DAY FEBRUARY 22<sup>nd</sup>  
10AM-3PM, TO LEARN MORE!**

