

# Please join us at the Catamount Hill Association's Annual Meeting

Saturday, August 14, 2021  
Mohawk Trail Regional High School  
26 Ashfield Road, Rte. 112, Buckland, MA  
1 pm EDT in person and via Zoom



The Catamount Hill Association was formally organized in 1875 to honor our ancestors, Quinquennials are held every five years. Celebrate 146 years with us!

## *Program*

- Welcome from the Association Acting President
- Business Meeting with reports from the Officers and Board Members and election of officers
- Program – Fanny Bowen Shippee

At our 2020 Quinquennial meeting, our new officers were elected. Since then our new President, Toni Manning, passed away. Below we offer a brief slate of officers for your consideration at the annual meeting.

### *Current Officers*

Acting President	Sonya Hamdan
Acting Vice President	Dorothy Giffin
Clerk	Linda Wagner
Treasurer	Diantha Wholey
Historian	Prentice Crosier
Board	Richard King Susan Samoriski Ellen Shaw

### *Election Candidates*

President	Sonya Hamdan
Vice President	Dorothy Giffin
Board	Sarah Davenport

## *How to Access the Meeting Using Zoom*

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail, please email us at [catamounthill1875@gmail.com](mailto:catamounthill1875@gmail.com) with your contact information so we can send you the link or the phone number and password to log onto the meeting.

## *Catamount Hill Association's 30th Quinquennial*

Our 30th Quinquennial was held virtually by Zoom with 46 in attendance beginning with the usual welcome and readings from the Benjamin Farley Bible.

The association has become a federally tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization since we last met. We are working on signage for hikers on the mountain. A new book, *The Toad and the Eagle, A Catamount Tale*, has been added to our publications, and our website and Facebook are under new direction.

At the close of the meeting our historian narrated a presentation of historic and contemporary images in an overview of some 250 years of Catamount Hill families.



**Fanny  
Bowen  
Shippee**  
(1836-1926)

Poet, writer,  
historian,  
wife and  
mother

Hailed as the 'poet of the mountain', Fanny Bowen Shippee lived up to that and more. Born in Whitingham, VT at the time of the Alamo in 1836, the same year Frederick Douglas first attempted to escape slavery, Fanny joined her two sisters in the Timothy Bowen family. Through numerous trials and tribulations Fanny became a strong, independent woman.

Hear how this strong-willed rural woman did not allow adversity to hold her back. Hear how she took advantage of newly enacted laws that supported women's rights. Learn about her struggles and triumphs. Her love and devotion to her family was a large part of who she was. So, too, was her devotion to Catamount Hill, its people and its history.

This extraordinary woman became a prolific writer and Catamount Hill Historian, marking down for posterity her recollections as well as historical events.

An excerpt from Fanny's article of March 16, 1901 showcases her strong feeling for Catamount Hill....."*It is to be regretted that the pure air and pure water, and the magnificent scenery of this mountain and its continuous land is not enjoyed, occupied and properly cultivated. The many cellar holes upon these hillsides bear silent witness of people who once lived here. How I have walked about those places trying to imagine how they looked and what they said...."*

## *What You Can Do*

- Share a brief story about your ancestor's life on the Hill
- Mail or email a letter about your Catamount Hill ancestor to be read at the meeting

We greatly appreciate the donations for the flag and flag pole at the school house site.

Your generosity exceeded our expectations, and the remaining balance will be used for trail markers for easier access to the site where the flag and flag pole were installed.

### Martha Shippee Farley Memory Album

Catamount Hill has a way of calling us home. Multiple descendants have independently discovered an affinity for this place of our forbears. Objects, also, occasionally find their way to us and into our collection of artifacts. One example is the tiny, travel-size hymnal which belonged to Elder Edward Davenport (1774-1864), discovered in a used bookshop in Vermont.

This year an antique memory book once belonging to Martha (Shippee) Farley (1809-1907) was spotted on Etsy by Rick King. "Puzzle" is a word sometimes used to describe our often confusing, interwoven family histories, but we have been able to snap Martha Shippee Farley exactly into place in our intricate jigsaw picture. She was a niece of the flag-raiser, Amasa Shippee.

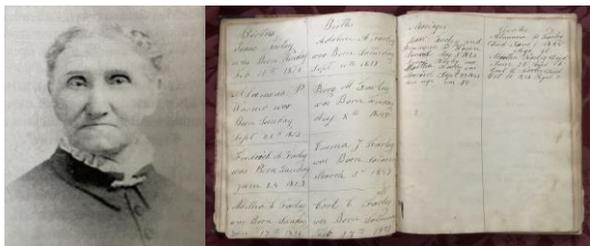
Martha Shippee was born in New York State where her father, Israel Shippee Sr. (1755-1832), had migrated to in 1800 from the East Charlemont edge of Catamount Hill. She returned to the home community of her parents in 1844 when she married, at the age of 35, the recently widowed Isaac Farley (1806-1862).

Over many years she collected verses and comments from friends and fellow schoolteachers in a book with marbled paper covers. One two-page spread records family births, marriages, and deaths.

Research reveals that Martha, at age 86, attended the fifth Quinquennial Reunion in 1895 which was held outdoors in George Cary's grove. On that occasion her granddaughter, Jennie Manning, read a poem about a butternut tree Martha had planted at age 10 and was still standing at the time. In another segment of the program one speaker described Martha as "one whom all love to honor".

Martha did not attend the sixth Quinquennial in 1900 but this quote relayed her message to the attendees: "Another, who has passed more than four score years and ten, but whose days are not all labor and sorrow, from her home in North Adams, "Aunt Martha Farley" sends, to the few remaining friends of her childhood, and the many friends of her maturer years, her greeting, and hopes for a blessed reunion "beyond the river"

And now her memory book, newly emerged from beyond time, is added to our Catamount archives.



A few months ago, one of our board members was contacted by Ray Boas, publisher of the *Walpole Clarion* in New Hampshire. He wanted information on the first flag flown over a schoolhouse on Catamount Hill to include in an article. Ray purchased two of our publications and drove to Colrain this spring, but the road to the flag site was impassable. Another road trip is planned!

On the *Clarion's* [website](#), the article is in the June 2021 issue on page 12 under the heading, "Did you know that...?"

### New Flag Poles and Flags



Installing the flag



April 3, 2021

Above photos of the new flag being raised on Catamount Hill at the monument site



May 9, 2021

Left photo of new flag and pole at West Branch Cemetery near the headstones of the patriotic people who made and flew the first flag over a school house in this country

Richard King, our newest board member, ably took on the project of replacing flag poles at the schoolhouse site on Catamount Hill and at West Branch cemetery in Colrain. Rick, his wife Darlene, and daughter Shannon carried tools, pole and flag to the site under difficult conditions to complete this task. Both poles were installed with flags waving in honor of Memorial Day. This was a long-term project, and we extend a big thank you to Rick and his family.

### Work Bee at Catamount Monument Site



THANK YOU!  
Field Maloney  
Darlene and Rick King  
Nelson Shifflett

A work bee at the schoolhouse monument site spearheaded by board member Richard King was held June 5, 2021. The site was cleared of brush, debris and rotting trees.

### *The Diary of Alice Mather, Coleraine*

In a tiny brown leather diary inscribed on the front fly leaf are the words "Alice Mather, Coleraine". Circa 1872, the brief penciled entries are written in delicate, cursive handwriting, presumably the handwriting of Alice Mather because it matches the penciled inscription on the front fly leaf.

Frederick William Mather (13 Oct. 1816 - 13 Sept. 1885) married Betsey Winchester (14 March, 1844) in Marlborough, Vt. where the Mathers were original settlers. They had five children: Betsey-Alice, Mary-Eliza, Leila- Harriet, Frederick-Emerson and Hiram-Frank, then moved to Coleraine sometime between 1860 and 1870 according to the US Census. The 1870 Census shows that Alice, age 23, is keeping house with Lelia and Frederick working at the cotton mill. Both Frederick-Emerson (age 16) and Betsey-Alice (age 24) die in 1871 and are buried in the Coleraine North Cemetery along with their parents. It is curious that all five children's names are hyphenated. Betsey-Alice becomes Alice B. on her tombstone. This information is from *The Benton-Mather-Smith Family Genealogy of 1630's Emigrants* by my cousin Jane Mather Benton Kennedy.

*Susan Benton Samoriski*

### *Excerpts from The Diary of Alice Mather, Coleraine*

**Tuesday, March 3**

*Terrible blustering and cold. Uncle George carried me to the Falls.*

**Monday, March 16**

*Sultry warm and foggy. I felt myself sick. Mr. James Davis taken with diphtheria.*

**Monday, March 23**

*Pleasant. We washed and cleaned house considerable.*

**Friday, April 3**

*We cleaned house nearly all day.*

**Tuesday, April 7**

*Snowed all day. also blustering and cold...*

**Sunday, April 12**

*Cold but quite pleasant. I went to Factory Village with Uncle to church and Mr. Sanderson was unable to preach so returned.*

**Saturday, May 30**

*Nice warm and pleasant. Sewing Machine came.....Today Aunt Eliza and myself made a pair woolen shirts for Uncle George*

**Saturday, June 20**

*Exceeding warm but very little air it seems. We must have the heat of the sun for vegetation therefore we accept as sent from above.*

*Drone Shot  
of  
Catamount  
Pond*



### *Arthur A. Smith Covered Bridge*



A decades-long debate about the future of the Arthur A. Smith Covered Bridge was settled recently with the Selectboard's vote to reopen the historic bridge to vehicular traffic.

*Greenfield Recorder 09/08/2020*

Although his family may not have been one of the original settlers of the Hill, Arthur A. Smith was a long time active member of CHA, starting in 1885 at the third reunion. According to the records of the early Quinquennials, he either sang or spoke at each reunion and also served on a wide range of committees.

### *Impressment of American Sailors*

In earlier days many governments recruited men into their military forces -- especially in wartime -- by aggressive means. Seductive events with rousing music and alcohol inspired recruits to sign up. In 1812, Britain's Royal Navy needed men for war against Napoleon Bonaparte, the self-crowned emperor of France who was intent on dominating the nations of Europe and their colonial possessions. The Royal Navy intercepted commercial ships at sea, including American ships, claiming to search for deserters, but also seizing Americans. This form of forced recruitment was known as impressment.

Before the American Revolution only one-third of the colonists had supported independence, and afterwards what defined nationality was not always clear.

But opinion on Catamount Hill was decisive. Veteran families read about impressment in the one newspaper passed around and they blamed James Madison's government for its weak response. Madison's party, the Federalists, was the party of shipping and banking interests of the east coast. They were eager to avoid clashing with the British and risk losing profitable wartime trade.

To the Catamount Hill patriots, an individual's inalienable rights mattered more than money. The history of their flag-raising to protest impressment is well known to our membership. We retell the story at our Quinquennial Reunions.

This illustration from an old schoolbook depicts one of the acts of impressment which impelled our ancestors to protest the practice in 1812.



## In Recognition



**TONI MANNING** passed away October 8, 2020 two short months after being elected president at our August Quinquennial meeting. Toni was an active part of numerous sub-committees donating countless hours to the benefit of the CHA. She was held in high esteem by those who volunteered along side her.



Photo Paul Franz

**SUSAN SAMORISKI**, long-time CHA board member, was chosen Greenfield Recorder's "Citizen of the Year" for 2020. Susan was recognized for her work as founder and director of the Mary Lyon Foundation where she has worked tirelessly on fundraising, capital campaigns and grant writing, all to the benefit of our local schools. We are privileged to have Sue on our board.



**BARBARA AND DOUGLAS JAMES** retired from the CHA board and left enormous vacancies to fill: Doug as Treasurer and Barb as Clerk. Our By-laws, 501 (c)(3) status and even a children's book were accomplished under their steady guidance. Such is their commitment to Catamount Hill that for years they drove fifty miles each way to attend board meetings. Their presence, dedication and leadership has been inspiring. THANK YOU.



**MURIEL RUSSELL** for her many years as an active association member. Muriel donated time and money to the research, update and publication of our *Catamount Hill Association 1875 – 1900* book. She spent untold hours at the local courthouse researching deeds to determine ownership of Hill properties and their boundaries. Through her guided hikes, Muriel acquaints descendants with their ancestral cellar hole and their roots. Her contributions are many and varied and we sincerely thank her for her support over the years.



**CAROL PURINGTON** a descendant of Catamount Hill, passed away December 8, 2020. Carol was the author of the publication, *Where the Schoolhouse Flag First Floated – the Story of Catamount Hill*. Carol wrote in many genres. Her haiku, *Reunion*, seems a fitting example of her work to include in this newsletter. Her contribution to the association was deeply appreciated.

*Reunion  
chasing voices up and down  
the family tree*

### Catamount Hill Publications make great family gifts

	<i>A Sketch of the Origin &amp; Growth of the Catamount Hill Association of Colrain, MA</i> \$20.00		<i>The Puzzle of Catamount Hill</i> \$8.00
	<i>The First School-house Flag</i> \$6.00		<i>The Toad and The Eagle – A Catamount Tale</i> \$7.00
	<i>Where the Schoolhouse Flag First Floated</i> \$7.00		<i>The Young Housekeepers' Companion</i> \$6.00

Tax-deductible donations will help support our mailings, website, meeting expenses and future activities.

Checks may be made out to:

Catamount Hill Association  
P.O. Box 8  
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

**The Catamount Hill Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity organization.**

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