

The Granite Kiss

Sunday August 23, 2015

Robert Frost Farm

Speaker Kevin Gardener

Attendees: Frank Farmer, Carol Pynn, Wendy Williams, Joanne Dickey and guests Joan Normington, Chip Dickey, Jen Wiley

In 1871 there were 250,000 miles of stone walls in New England. That was made up of foundations, wells, property lines, road markers, town pounds, animal fences, retaining walls. That was enough stones to go from Windham Center to the moon.

Early fences were made up of tree stumps, dirt mounds and split tail fences. In the 1800's the New England landscape was becoming devoid of trees, but what we had a plenty was stones.

The sheep craze in the 1800's created a need for bigger and higher stone walls to keep the sheep away from the cattle, and in their pens. We all know how that played out in the Wild West.

In the middle 1800's barb wire came into fashion, which saved a lot of farmers from going to the chiropractors.

In 1830 the small farms reached a "Finished way of life" and the forthcoming industrial revolution displaced the country folk to the city.

Farms were starting to be abandoned and the stone walls began a period of "Gentile wreckage." Left to the own devise and with no maintenance, the once mighty walls began to disappear.

These mighty walls, once a sign of a booming agricultural and wool industry were helped along by a new industry called development. The walls that stood for many years were no match for bull dozers and unscrupulous individuals who made off with the stones under the cover of darkness, only to be sold to flat landers for exorbitant amounts of money. If only the farmers knew that their stones were worth more than their farms, we could have had a stone industry revival.

Once gone these walls are gone forever, like the Pyramids to be illustrated in a book that future generations can look back on and reflect on how it was.

Notes recorded by Frank Farmer