

ORIGINS OF OLD HOME DAY

Researched and written by Al Peckham

At the annual town meeting 85 years ago, on February 1, 1909, Article 15, "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred dollars for Old Home Week and to appoint an Old Home Week Committee to act thereon." The article failed to pass. But in 1912 the first old home celebration was held for one day on July 31, 1912, according to Ruth Wilkins Hollis' record, "It was a beautiful summer day, with the Town Flag flying on the Common and the Soldiers' Monument in the Square decorated with flags and flowers."

That was 82 years ago. The next year a Carlisle Old Home Day Association was formed. Held annually until 1915, the fifth event was held four years later after World War I on September 1, 1919, including a reception for Carlisle soldiers and sailors returning from war service. The parade that day included most of the twenty World War I veterans and a few Civil War veterans.

It is not clear how many such days were celebrated between 1919 and 1975; there were none for several years. But on Labor Day, September 3, 1934, Old Home Day was held by the Carlisle Old Home Day Association, which had its beginnings in 1913. This was in the depths of the Great Depression.

The next event is said to have been held on Labor Day, September 2, 1946, and was a welcome home event for World War II veterans, to whom Certificates of Appreciation were given.

Edmund L. French printed the programs through all these years until his death in 1982.

After another lapse, Mrs. Mary Sleeper, now of Rivercrest in Concord, NH revived the customs with a local committee in 1967 as a Fourth of July happening.

The enthusiasm for the Old Home Day event heightened in the mid-1970s, largely because of the bicentennial, it has continued consistently during these past three decades. In 1974, the late Andrew L. Brown chaired the event. An honored guest that year was Alfred M. Worden [Apollo Astronaut] of the Apollo 15 flight, and a friend and guest of Dave and Florence Reed.

Waldo D. Wilson was honored in that year for his service as town accountant for 45 years and fire chief for 50 years.

This traditional event has been celebrated ever since. During these years, an outstanding citizen of the year has been honored, and in recent years, a Conservationist Award has also become traditional.

TODAY

The present Old Home Day Association was incorporated in May, 1975 as The Old Home Day Association, inc. and remains dedicated to keeping this tradition right and proper. It continues to be run by the people for the people.

As a non-profit corporation formed in accordance with Massachusetts General laws (chapters 156B and 180), and U.S. Federal laws governing non-profits (501 c 3), the Old Home Day (OHD) Association is required to follow stringent rules to report it's operations and finances in order to solicit funds from the general public and maintain it's non-profit status. These reporting requirements are a matter of public record.

By law, OHD follows Articles of Organization as does any corporation in Massachusetts. Accordingly, it has a board of directors and an operating President duly elected on an annual basis.

The OHD Annual Report, Articles of Incorporation and public financials are available from the Secretary of State's Office [<http://www.sec.state.ma.us>].