To All Members of the Country Squires

Minutes of the Meeting on June 8th 2023

Garry Keane, President, called the meeting to order and asked that we have a moment of silence for Dave Donovan, who recently died.

Emerson Colby offered Words of Inspiration

Garry Keane asked if we need to approve the meeting minutes from the May meeting. It was suggested that we not read the meeting minutes but ask if there are any suggested modifications/corrections to the published meeting minutes - passed by vote of Members. No modifications/corrections for the May Meeting Minutes were identified – the meeting minutes were approved as written.

Garry has updated the Country Squires web site (https://www.countrysquiresnh.org ). If anyone has any copies of some of the missing meeting minutes and/or presenter information please pass this on to Garry so it can be uploaded to the web site

A discussion on the dues resulted in a recommendation to keep the dues at $25/year – approved by unanimous vote of the Members.

If anyone has any suggestions for a presenter, please pass it on to one of the members of the Program Committee

John Wilson introduced his guest, Steve Ensign.

Gil Watkins was introduced as a prospective member by Steve Priest. He was subsequently approved for membership by unanimous vote.

Today’s speaker, Steve Taylor was introduced. Steve is the former Agricultural Commissioner of New Hampshire who spoke on the great “Sheep Boom” in NH in the early part of the 19th Century. This period saw an economic explosion in this part of NH as the import of Spanish sheep led to rapid growth in the wool business. This in turn led to the building of mills to process the wool which we see today in many local towns. The sheep population in this NH region rose arithmetically as farmers saw their economic situations expand with the demand for wool. Remnants of the “Sheep Boom” can still be seen in the stone walls that remain which were constructed to corral the sheep population. The period 1815 to 1840 saw the peak of the boom, but in the early 1840s a combination of the growth in cotton weaving and an economic Depression saw an end to the boom and a collapse in the local wool economy. The economics of an agricultural economy in New England with its poor soil and climate was supplanted by the superior agricultural areas in the Midwest and South of the U.S. The collapse of the “Sheep Boom” and agricultural economy in New England led to a 30% population decline after the Civil War period. However, the remnants of the “Sheep Boom” economy can still be seen today in some of the remaining grand homes and elaborate churches that remain in NH from the 1815 to 1840 period as well as the stone walls that dot the state. Steve’s speech on this period was one of the best presentations that we have had at the Squires’ luncheons!

The next speaker at our July Meeting July 13th will be Peter Diamond, the noted Nobel Prize winner in Economics.

Submitted: Tom Flynn, Secretary