

Julia B. Fleet

SUNDAY RIVER

Mrs. R. M. Fleet, Corres.

Through her interest in and devotion to news reporting, Julia Fleet became Sunday River valley's pre-eminent historical resource for the 50 years before ski development transformed the valley after 1980. Her photographs of so many of the "old places" in the valley became important additions to Martha Fifield Wilkins sketches of life in the valley. Note in the following 1980 news article how she also was a weather reporter for the New York Times. In her photograph of the Fleet home one can see a radio antenna attached to the frame of a second story window.

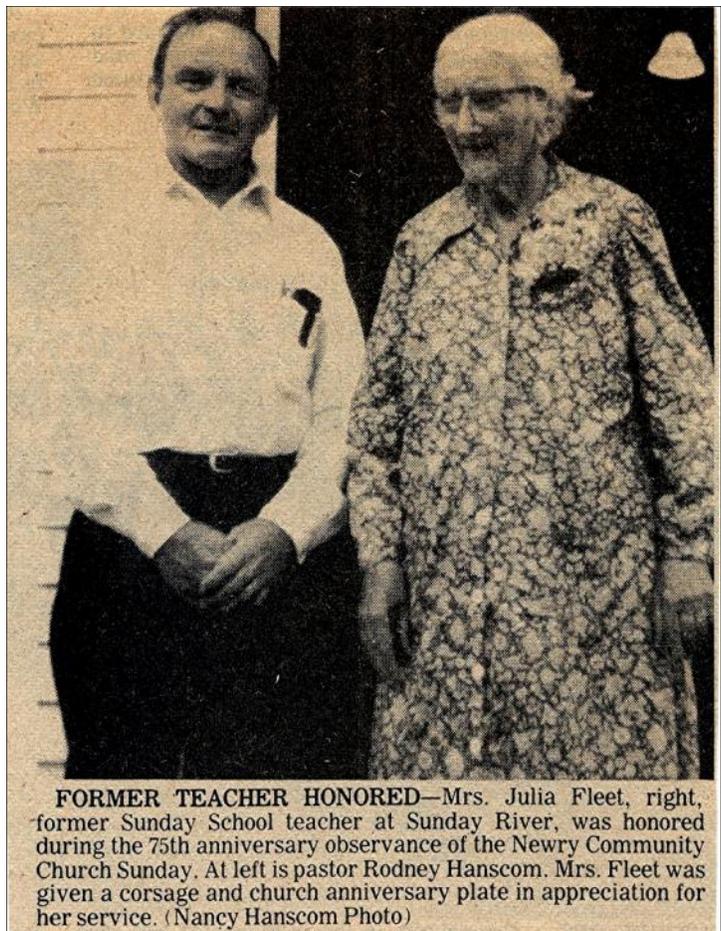
The Bethel Citizen, July 31, 1980

Newry's 175th Anniversary Celebration Will Include Honors for Mrs. Fleet, August 9

A Newry citizen who will be honored at Newry's celebration of its 175th anniversary August 9, 1980 is Julia Fleet, who has the distinction of being the oldest resident. Born in Waterville, Maine February 8, 1897, she is the oldest of four children of Spencer and Bertha (Aker) Brookes.

Mrs. Fleet attended school in Gorham, graduating from Gorham High School. As was often the custom of the times, she started teaching immediately, furthering her education by taking summer courses at Gorham State Teachers College, and Farmington Teachers College.

She recalls teaching at Streaked Mountain, South Paris, Waldoboro, Wilson's Mills Magalloway, Bolsters Mills and Sunday River, Newry. She well remembers the country



FORMER TEACHER HONORED—Mrs. Julia Fleet, right, former Sunday School teacher at Sunday River, was honored during the 75th anniversary observance of the Newry Community Church Sunday. At left is pastor Rodney Hanscom. Mrs. Fleet was given a corsage and church anniversary plate in appreciation for her service. (Nancy Hanscom Photo)

school. Although most pupils, called scholars then, walked to school, some from a distance were carried to school by wagon in summer and sleigh in winter. In all, she taught school for over 25 years. The building where she taught at Sunday River, known as the Lower School, is now on the National Register of Historic Places and may be visited in the summer. It has been changed very little since Mrs. Fleet taught there.



THE LOWER SUNDAY RIVER SCHOOLHOUSE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE; IN THE CENTER REAR OF THE LEFT PHOTO STANDS THE ORGAN USED FOR CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1933 she married Roland Fleet and came to their home place on Sunday River where she has lived ever since. They had one son, David and five grandchildren. David married the former Edith Jeanne Rolfe.

Mrs. Fleet's interests and hobbies have been numerous. A great community service which she carried on for over 35 years was superintending and teaching Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. Both local and visiting children will happily the house spent with her in the Lower School. She has always enjoyed her garden and especially her pets. In the past they raise horses, cattle, chickens, pigs and turkeys. Even now retired and a widow, she had pet cats, a dog, a chicken and two geese. Injured animals and birds could also find a friend in her. Mrs. Fleet belonged to the Extension Service and has been a member of the Grange for 62 years.

She was a news writer for the Bethel Citizen, the Norway Advertiser and Rumford Falls Times for over 30 years. Her comments about local people were informative and colorful. For many years she operated a weather station for the Times. Now 83 years old, Mrs. Fleet speaks of the many changes on Sunday River, the famous Artist Bridge, the roads, houses and people both old-timers and newcomers.



The Foster-Fleet house, built by Elhanan B. Foster, later the residence of David Fleet and now by his son Roland Fleet and family. Photo 1946, by Mrs. Julia Fleet. Sunday River Sketches photograph



This is the home of the John Nowlin family as it looked in 1946 when Mrs. Julia Fleet took the photo. Although the shed and barn are gone the house with some remodeling was moved back from the road but it still stands in 2011, located on the Sunday River Road across from the lower entrance to Coombs Village. Sunday River Sketches photo



Another 1946 Julia Fleet photograph shows the former Rob Bean family's farm which stood just south of Barker Brook where the Matterhorn Ski Bar is located in 2011. This house is credited to members of the Riley family who originally settled in Ketchum and who gave the name Riley to the plantation. Sunday River Sketches photo

Selected Sunday River news columns written by Mrs. Julia Fleet

May 2, 1940

SUNDAY RIVER

The American Realty Co. have gone into Ketchum to start the pulp drive.

Two teams have gone to Ketchum to work for the Bartlett Brothers.

Will Gorman has gone visiting for a few days.

Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Fleet and son were in Gorham, West Scarboro and Portland over the recent holiday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey Reynolds and son, also Riley Reynolds, were home at J. W. Reynolds' recently.

Misses Isobel and Irene Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton Horne of Dixfield and Harry Chase and family of Hanover were at R. L. Foster's Sunday. Mrs. Bert Brown of Bethel and Mr. and Mrs. John Nowlin also called.

Willie Powers was home from East Bethel over the week-end.

Mr. and Mrs. Benton Swan were Sunday callers at Willie Powers.

Mrs. Bertha Bean has gone to Providence, R. I., for a few days.

Ernest Bennett was in town Monday inspecting the roads.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Spinney are improved from their recent colds.

Mr. and Mrs. George Blaisdell of Rumford were in town Monday.

Mrs. Guy Soper of Bethel called on Mrs. Powers and Mrs. R. M. Fleet Monday.

Many deer have been seen in the fields the past few days.

About this column: The first item about the American Realty Co pulp drive is important as to its date. Alan Fleet, Mrs. Fleet's grandson, tells of how when his father David was a small boy his mother kept him in the house on the day when a roaring sound warned that the drive was coming down Sunday River. The

In writing the columns on this and the next page, Mrs. Fleet's contributions to history create a record of names of valley residents and names of visitors, members of the family, business people and community activity.

October 5, 1944

SUNDAY RIVER

Mrs. Daisy Crosby has closed her home and gone to Portland to visit Mrs. Earl Williamson and family before going to Arlington, Mass. Miss Ruth Crosby has returned to her teaching duties at Orono.

Owen Demeritt and Alva Morrison were in Ketchum last week a few days.

Flood Verrill and son Ralph of Concord, Mass., also Mr. and Mrs. Robert Leahey and daughter Avis of Falmouth were at the Verrill place. Mr. Verrill has remained this week to work about the place.

The R. M. Fleets are all better of their recent illness.

Roger Reynolds was home over the week end.

R. L. Foster is not very well at this writing.

Miss Irene Foster was home from Dixfield over the weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fisher of Lowell, Mass., are at their place for a few days.

Mrs. Claude Collins called on Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Esther Powers last week.

Miss. Homan Bacon and son of Portsmouth, N. H., were in town over the weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Nowlin and daughter were recent callers at his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Nowlin.

Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Bean have painted their house.

Mrs. Tina Reynolds called on Mrs. Nettie Fleet recently.

river passes behind their home only a short distance away. Alan said that the log drivers usually took their lunch break on the river bank and would come to the house to eat lunch.

Sept 28, 1978

SUNDAY RIVER

Mr. and Mrs. Bryce Yates hosted the Rowe Reunion Sunday Sept. 24 at their home. It was a beautiful day and about 65 gathered for a bountiful pot luck dinner on the lawn and an afternoon of sociability and renewing old times etc. The most of the Rowes are gone by the “chips off the old block” can still get together. We had two couples from New Hampshire and one from Florida who had not been able to come for a long time. If all goes well we just may be meeting next year again.

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Blosssey arrived in town Thursday night for a couple weeks visit with friends and relative and to celebrate Mrs. Blosssey’s (nee Kaye Blake) 20th graduation.

Verna Swan visited Eva and Russell Yates one day this week.

Laura Hutchins had supper with her mother, Eva, and brother Russell, Saturday night.

Peggy Blake and Russell Yates did considerable repair work on the Bear River Grange Hall Friday.

Bear River Grange # 285 met at their hall Saturday night. It was scrambled officer’s night. We had eight visitors and a good time was enjoyed.

What has become of Maude Harrington?

Miles Brookes of South Windham called on his sister Julia Fleet Monday.

The wind is a bit cool.

The leaves have turned very fast the last couple of days.

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