

by Lauri Arruda

*Did you know that people living outside of Hopkinton have not heard of Gate Night?*

That's because the pranks on the night before Halloween originated in Hope Valley.

In the late 1800's folks in Hope Valley fenced their yards in with white picket fences, or an occasional iron fence. As the late Gladys Segar told in an interview, the young folks of Hope Valley thought up with the idea of pranking homeowners by stealing their front gates and switching them with other neighbors. The next morning, most home owners took the prank in stride and hunted around town until their own gate was found. This was all in good fun for a few years until the young men of Hope Valley hoisted a wagon onto the roof of the Depot Square train station.

Eventually, gate night caught on in the village of Ashaway.

As Gladys recalled, "gate night" became the night for teenagers to participate in pranks. Year after year they would try to outdo the pranks from previous year. Gate night caught on in Ashaway, and ringing the school bell without being caught by adults became the highlight of Ashaway's gate night.

Until that night became down right destructive.

Gate night lasted well into the 1990's and as the generations who participated passed away, the night eventually faded from memory.