



# **Williston Historical Society Bulletin**

Volume 45, Number 2

October 2018

“Every individual is an historical figure.”

Founded 1974

S. & J. Burroughs, Editors

## **WHS Officers**

President – Brenda Perkins  
Vice President – Meghan Cope  
Secretary – Marlene Price  
Treasurer – Jon Stokes  
Archivist – Adriene Katz

Directors: Steve Perkins  
Bob Bradish  
Adriene Katz, Collections Manager/Archivist  
Terry Macaig, Past President

## **Save the Dates**

**November 3 - 10:30am**

**Dorothy Alling Memorial Library**

**Community Room**

**Annual Meeting**

**To elect officers & Board**

**Followed by:**

Tracy Martin, VT Historic Sites Section Chief will present tales of President Chester Arthur including his ties to Williston. She will also share interesting information about our Vermont historic sites.

Admission, as always, is free.

Please join us!

**Saturday October 21 – 10:00am**

**Civil War Tour of Lakeview Cemetery**

Hosted by Friends of Lakeview Cemetery

## **Please update your email address and phone number**

If you have not recently updated your email address with the WHS, please do so by sending your current email address to Bob Bradish at [robertdonab@myfairpoint.net](mailto:robertdonab@myfairpoint.net) or by calling him at 872-8775

**WHS membership renewal is due by the annual meeting Nov. 3. If unable to attend the meeting, please mail your check to: Williston Historical Society, Box 995, Williston, VT 05495**

## **Report from the President**

Dear Members,

Since the last newsletter the Society has continued to move forward in offering opportunities to explore Williston History. The Vermont Room in the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library (DAML) is open during library hours for research and exploration of some of the artifacts from Williston's past. We have helped several new Williston residents find information on their older homes, assisted in connecting Vermont Sons of the American Revolution with information on the original Thomas Chittenden home, connected with a parent planning a "Williston Landscape Change" project with his child's WCS 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, and plan to meet with one of Williston's Boy Scout groups to share Williston's history.

Our annual Ice Cream Social was a success even though the Fun Run was canceled due to heat and the ice cream melted almost as soon as it was scooped!!

On September 30<sup>th</sup> Stephen Perkins, Director of the Vermont State Historical Society and Williston native presented "Travelling Treasures" to a full house. (See article in newsletter p. 3). We are quickly approaching the end of our calendar year and our annual meeting. On November 3 you are invited to the community room at DAML to participate in a very brief business meeting (election of officers and board) followed by a presentation by Tracy Martin, Vermont State Historic Sites Chief. She will share some tales of Chester Arthur and his ties to Williston as well as interesting information about Vermont historic sites.

Please consider some of the opportunities to serve listed in this newsletter. We have exciting days ahead.

Brenda Perkins, President

### **Williston Historical Society Needs your help!**

#### **WHS is growing and would like YOU to take part in the fun!!**

Are committees and meetings not your thing? We have many ways that you can contribute to WHS on a one time or "once in awhile" basis.

Contact us at [willistonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:willistonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com) and let us know what your interests are and how you can help.

Sign up to help out in any of the following ways:

- Hospitality (arrange for and set up light refreshments during our programs)
- Ice Cream Social July 3<sup>rd</sup> (help pick strawberries, make sauces, or scoop ice cream)
- Publications (write or find articles for our newsletter published biannually)
- Oral History (interviewing and/or transcribing recorded history)
- Archive work (working under the leadership of our archivist, help with collection management, cataloguing, accessioning, etc.)
- Exhibits (working with WHS board members, arrange exhibits for July 4<sup>th</sup> and other events)
- Membership (Assist in maintaining membership rolls and recruiting new members)

**Become a member!**

## September 30<sup>th</sup> Presentation

The "Travelling Treasure" Show!

This sounds like the travelling salesman of yore, but indeed was a fascinating journey exploring some artifacts from the archives of the Vermont Historical Society. Stephen Perkins, Director of the Vermont State Historical Society and Williston native packed the house on a busy Sunday afternoon, September 30<sup>th</sup>. He brought with him a book containing Vermont founding documents including the official notification of Vermont Statehood signed by Thomas Jefferson, the only complete collection of tax stamps in the United States from the 1797 stamp act, Lord Byron's sword, Morey's original rotary steam engine, silver and gold world champion wrestler's belt, Admiral Dewey's epaulets, and an Abnaki/Swiss style woven basket. Each of these items prompted fascinating tales of their connection to Vermont and one especially to Williston. It was a presentation not to have missed! So keep your eyes open for further programs and join us!!

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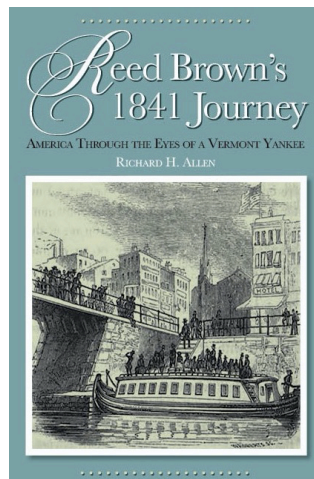
### **Williston News Item from The Burlington Independent Newspaper March 25, 1871**

The quiet town of Williston has again been visited by burglars. The corner store owned by Wilkins and Murray, was broken open Saturday night, and entrance effected at the front doors, by boring a hole near the bottom of one of them, and inserting a cord with which they raised the bolt and sprang the doors apart so that they unlocked. Nothing was missed, except a box of cigars and about \$10 in script and revenue stamps. There was \$50 in a small money drawer with bell attached. No one is suspected. It is supposed the burglars were frightened away or they would have broken open the other drawer and taken the \$50.00 and very likely too, a quantity of goods.

We learn also, that a store at North Williston depot was broken open on Monday night, the 20<sup>th</sup>. Have not learned the particulars.

### **I Remember...**

Please share if you have a memory of growing up or living in Williston,  
Send your memory to Jeneva Burroughs  
[momdad.burroughs@gmail.com](mailto:momdad.burroughs@gmail.com).  
or mail to 81 Peterson Ln. Williston, VT 05495



**Book Release: Saturday, November 10, 10:30 a.m.  
At the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library  
New Publication Sponsored by the Historical Society**

**Reed Brown's 1841 Journey:  
America Through the Eyes of a Vermont Yankee  
By Richard H. Allen**

In the fall of 1841, Williston native and Essex resident Reed Brown set out on a two-month odyssey with dual goals: to obtain a patent for his improved carriage springs, and to assist his brother Nathaniel, in jail in Ohio. Reed kept a journal that chronicles the dangers and difficulties, as well as some of the pleasures, of travel in that time.

He experienced:

- a steamboat explosion,
- a rail car derailment,
- hours of a bone-jarring stagecoach ride,
- delightful encounters with fellow travelers,
- unhurried travel on canal boats,
- and warm hospitality along the way.

The journal has been transcribed, supplemented with illustrations, and presented in a well-researched historical context that includes reminiscences from more famous writers of the same time period, such as Charles Dickens and Frances Trollope.

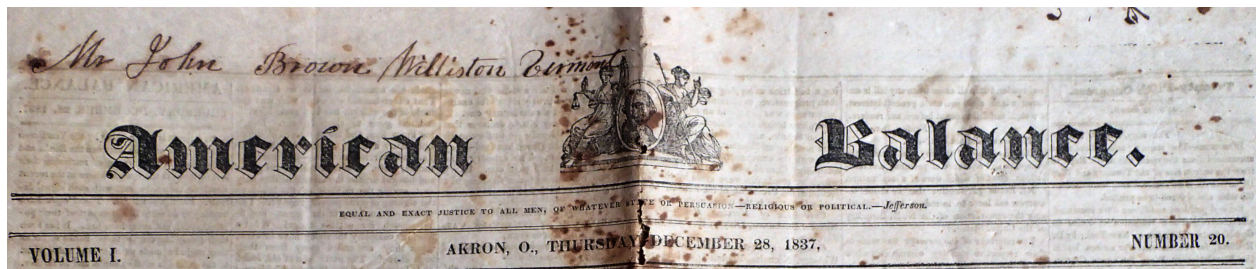
Reed's journal was given to the Williston Historical Society in 1982 by Lorraine Brown, a direct descendant. The society sponsored and partially funded this publication. *Reed Brown's 1841 Journey: America Through the Eyes of a Vermont Yankee* will be available in November at the book release. Also orders can be submitted to Richard Allen, 3 Oakwood Lane, Essex Jct., VT 05452. The cost is \$20.00, plus \$3.00 for shipping.

"The narrative...created to surround and contextualize the journal entries are chock-full of relevant and interesting information that make the story come alive, help the reader understand Reed's experience, and illuminate the history of the places and people Reed encountered. Bravo for a job well done!"

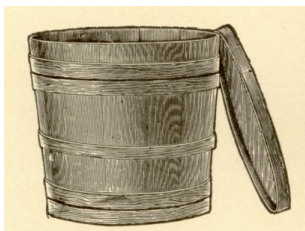
Alan Berolzheimer, Ph.D., editor



A quick preview of some of the items in the book...



The top of the front page of the Akron, Ohio *American Balance* newspaper dated December 28, 1837 that was mailed to John Brown (Reed's father) in Williston. This predates Reed's visit to Akron and shows that the Brown family had contacts in Ohio, probably through Reed's cousin Merrick Burton. Newspapers played an important role in antebellum American life, and kept Reed connected with the rest of the country during his journey. They were often aligned with a political party, and the *American Balance* was no different. It was a Whig paper, first published on August 19, 1837. Newspapers received reduced postal rates from the government, so they became a low-cost form of communication for people who wanted to give the folks back home an idea of what was happening in the adopted community. Gift from Richard Allen and Davideen M. DeGraff to the Akron-Summit County Public Library, Special Collections, originally in the Brown Family Paper



Retiring from farming, Reed and Electa Brown moved to North Williston. In 1873, Reed had purchased the butter tub manufacturing business owned by Wilkins & Loggins located there. This is an "Elgin-style" butter tub produced by the Elgin Butter Tub Company of Illinois. Image courtesy of Paul Wood

The interior of the National Portrait Gallery at 8th and F Streets NW in Washington, D.C. This was originally the Patent Office Building where Reed Brown spent time viewing patent models and the curiosities of the museum that was the precursor to the Smithsonian Institution. He was waiting for his patent paper work to be completed. Photo by Richard Allen



Reed returned from Buffalo to river or ravine, and the structures of the Rexford aqueduct Schenectady. New construction and by Richard Allen



his journey taking advantage of the Erie Canal Albany, 363 miles. When the canal had to cross an aqueduct was built to ease the passage. Many of early canal still exist. This is the remains of the where the canal crossed the Mohawk River near York State is celebrating the bicentennial of the completion of the Erie Canal (1817-1825). Photo

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## **SOUNDS OF HISTORY**

### **The pipe organ of the Federated Church**

In 1867, the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Williston dedicated their new church. The new church (located on the corner of Williston Rd. & No. Williston Rd.) replaced their smaller brick church (still standing next to the Universalist church (the Town Hall). The new, tall white church became an instant landmark and remains so today, home to the Federated Church congregation. That congregation is composed of a union of two Protestant faiths, Congregational (United Church of Christ) and Methodist (original owners). The Congregationalists originally occupied the Old Brick Church and had joined with the Methodists in 1899 to form Vermont's first "federated" congregation.

The new Methodist church was designed by John Stevens, of Boston, who had also designed the similar but larger Baptist Church in Burlington a few years previous. The style, as was the case in nearly a hundred Stevens' churches, was a modified Romanesque and the distinctive tower style is found today in many of his other churches. Although the interior was relatively simple it was furnished with the high Victorian style of the times. Heavy, carved chairs, altar, were supplied by the Thomas Brooks company in New York. For music accompaniment, there was a square grand piano and a wonderful small pipe organ.

The organ was purchased from the Derrick and Felgemaker company of Erie, Pennsylvania. This ornate little masterpiece was a popular design with that company and today here are several other nearly exact instruments still in use in other churches. The design included a gothic style pediment with small carved spires and ornaments. The case was heavily carved and paneled, and the openings into its mechanical interior were screened in red damask screen openings.

The Felgemaker organ required one person, other than the performer, to pump its bellows with a side lever system. Later on in the twentieth century this system was replaced with an electrified bellows, remembered by some as rather "noisy".

The Derrick and Felgemaker company described this organ as "portable" but it is unlikely it was meant to be moved around constantly and was in fact, very heavy. Once installed in the Federated church, it apparently was never moved from its location to the right of altar for nearly ninety years.

In the 1950's, with the advent of new electronic organs, the congregation made a decision to remove the pipe organ and purchase a more versatile new electronic instrument. The Felgemaker organ was never a "loud" instrument and among the considerations the congregation was considering was a need for more volume. Fortunately, the lovely little organ was purchased by the Shelburne Museum and installed in their newly moved and restored Charlotte Meeting House at the Museum; it resides there today, restored and playable. Used for occasional weddings, the instrument has a clear and mellow tone and for those who can manage to hear it, it is a sound once enjoyed by generations of Willistonians.

As an additional "note", there was also another remarkable small pipe organ in Williston, built by local genius Walter Munson. He built this little organ for the Universalist Church (now Town Hall) but it sadly has long ago disappeared. Munson also constructed the marvelous grandfather clock which the Historical Society now owns.

Photos & Article courtesy of Mark Hutchins.

**Don't Forget to Check Out**

**WHS FaceBook Page & Old Brick Church FaceBook Page**