



Williston Historical Society
P.O. Box 995
Williston, VT 05495

Exciting Things Happening at WHS – See inside!

Newsletter — Spring 2022



Williston Historical Society Bulletin

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“Every individual is an historical figure.”

Founded 1974

S. & J. Burroughs, Editors

WHS Officers

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Renewal/New Membership

The Williston Historical Society is continuing to offer free membership. **We still ask that you renew your membership each year** so we can keep a count and make sure we have current contact information. To renew or become a member of the Williston Historical Society please send an email to peter.callas@uvm.edu with your preferred contact information. You may also write us at Williston Historical Society, P.O. Box 995, Williston, VT 05495. We are always looking for folks who would like to be a more active member by volunteering for events or projects, so please indicate such on your membership email/letter.

Upcoming Event

Williston History Walk

The Williston Historical Society and the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library are inviting you to an historic walking tour of the Village of Williston. The walk will be led by Richard H. Allen, retired Williston teacher and the author of “Images of America: Williston”, as well as numerous other books and articles about the area. On this one and a half hour tour, Richard will share the rich history of human stories that are behind our well-traveled portion of Williston Road. The tour will meet at the library Saturday, June 4 at 10:30am. Please register at: damlvt.org to reserve a spot on the tour. Don't forget to bring your umbrella! This is a rain or shine event that will help you see your town as you never have before.

Report from the President

Greetings,

Spring is in the air and it's time to look back at the past few months and hopefully ahead to a more active Williston Historical Society. Covid doesn't want to release its strangle-hold on our lives quite yet, but it looks like we can make plans for some activities in the coming months.

In February we were able to meet in person, masked. Stacey McKenna has agreed to take over the job of corralling articles for the Williston Observer. She recently sent out a request for members and friends to email her with topics that might become "fodder" for an interesting article. I encourage you to think about this and send her ideas!

Erik Wells, our Town manager, was approached by the Lafayette Society regarding the placement of an official marker on the town green noting Lafayette's stop in Williston during his grand tour in 1825. Over the years, oral history has stated he stopped at the Eagle Tavern which stood on the site where the Federated Church now stands. After research by WHS members it was ascertained that he couldn't have stopped at the tavern as it was not built until 1827. He may have stopped at that spot, but there is no historical evidence to verify this.

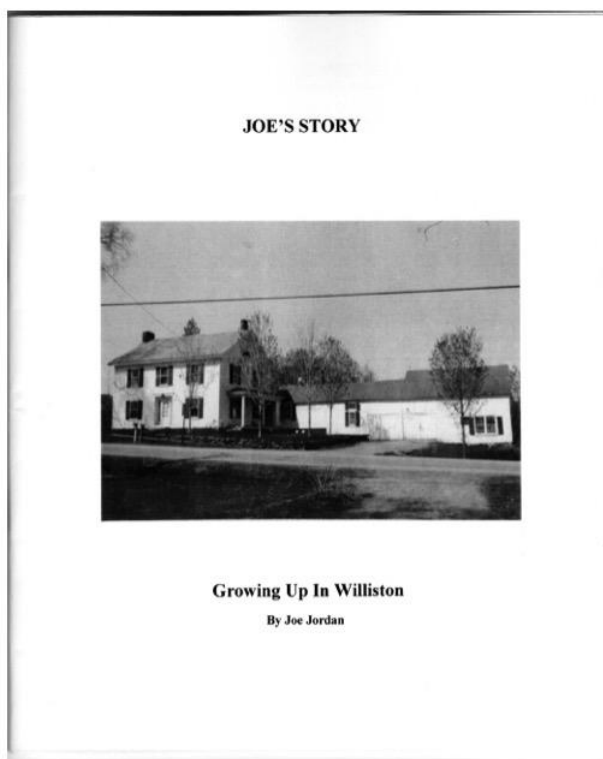
Our April meeting was held in person, but we were missing a couple of board members due to our current nemesis, Covid! There are some great programs in the works for this spring and summer -- May 7 is the official Green-up Day, the Stovepipe Corner's Schoolhouse will be open during the Town Fair on the Green.

- In June, in collaboration with the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library, an historic building walking tour will take place. See Upcoming Events!
- On July 4th the Schoolhouse will again be open with a new exhibit and hopefully refreshments.

Other exciting ideas for programs and activities were discussed and are in the works so keep an eye on our Facebook page and your email in-box.

Take care everyone,

Brenda Perkins, President



Book Review: *Joe's Story: Growing Up in Williston*

By Elizabeth A. Allen

In *Joe's Story: Growing Up in Williston*, Joe Jordan, a longtime Essex resident retired from a career in residential construction, collects tales of growing up in an 1804 farmhouse at 8225 Williston Road in Williston village. "I wrote these memories in the spring of 2021 for my children and grandchildren," he says at the end of his 38-page pamphlet, but the stories within will appeal to anyone curious about growing up in Williston as part of the post-WWII baby boom.

For example, Joe relates his early attempts to earn money by selling used golf balls. He writes: "... Francis [Mongeon], Edward [Mongeon], and I began a long-running summer occupation collecting and selling golf balls at the Williston Golf Course. The golf course conveniently bordered Pepere's [his friends' grandfather's] big hay and corn field (now a housing development on Lefebvre Lane) behind his barn."

Once they collected enough stray balls from the golf course woods, Joe and his friends offered them to golfers at the tees. "We would have to be very careful...because the golf course owner, Ben Murray, lived in a log home close by the fifth hole," Joe says. "He did not like anyone selling cheap golf balls. Ben wanted the golfers to...buy the expensive balls in his clubhouse shop."

Fortunately, the fifth hole “had many escape routes if we saw Ben coming in his Jeep. We were never actually caught by Ben, but there were a few hair-raising near misses when he snuck up on us in his Jeep and we had to hightail it into the woods,” recalls Joe. “The golf ball selling enterprise brought...some good spending money, especially for seven- and eight-year-olds,” he concludes.

Joe’s vignettes cover many other frequently humorous childhood experiences: building forts by Allen Brook, delivering the *Burlington Free Press* in all weather, constructing a multistory treehouse, exploring abandoned culverts, Cabbage Night pranks, and wild cucumber bombardments. For a fascinating look into the way kids entertained themselves in Williston in the 1960s, you can find *Joe’s Story: Growing Up in Williston* in the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library.

World War II Veterans Remembered, Part III

As described in the Spring 2021 newsletter, the historical society has received an album of photographs of Williston World War II veterans from Cameron Clark. Here are two more examples from the collection: Clarence Kendrew and William Begins.



Clarence C. Kendrew enlisted in February of 1943 and served overseas as a truck driver in the 9th Air Force. He won three battle stars for the Normandy, Northern France, and Germany campaigns. By February of 1944 he had attained the rank of Corporal after having been in the army for a year. In November of 1945, he married Ruth Miller in Richmond.

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William C. Begins enlisted in the Navy in 1943 and became a machinist's mate, second class. He served three years and five months aboard destroyers and hospital ships. He won numerous campaign ribbons and two battle stars. He was also awarded a World War II Victory Medal and a good conduct medal. In 1946, he joined the Army and remained active until 1949. In 1953 he married Marilyn A. Vest.

New Dentist in Town

By Richard Allen



Dr. Daniel W. Smead sits on his front steps at 66 Main Street in Essex Junction. The sign says Smead's Dental, Rooms. The photograph is from the Wilbur C. Sawyer collection at the Vermont Historical Society, courtesy of Tim Jerman of the Essex Community Historical Society

If you were a Chittenden County resident and in need of dental work in 1871, you would welcome the announcement that Dr. Daniel W. Smead would soon open an office in Williston. A veteran of the Civil War, Smead came from Malone, New York and offered "all kinds of dental work in a thorough and satisfactory manner and at most reasonable rates....All work warranted, and satisfaction guaranteed."


Smead was a traveling dentist, his route included Chittenden County and Addison County in such towns as Bristol, Milton, Hinesburgh, and Richmond. Residents were encouraged to inquire at the village hotel to learn of his local schedule. Those seeking assurance of his skills in “mechanical and surgical dentistry” could contact “his many acquaintances of Malone of his reputation and success there.” In addition, “nitrous oxide or laughing gas” was offered “for the painless extraction of teeth to those who desire it.”

Part of Smead’s training was under the guidance of Dr. Sheldon in Malone and at the Harvard Dental School where he attended lectures.

So how far advanced was dentistry at this time? In 1871 the first foot powered mechanized dental drill was patented by James Beal Morrison. The slow-moving drill would require a patient to sit still for perhaps a couple of hours under the care of the dentist. He also invented an adjustable dental chair that allowed the patient to take a number of comfortable positions. Morrison was an Ohio native and internationally trained in Paris and London.

In early 1874, it was announced that Smead would soon return to Malone. But the decision was rescinded due to the “large number of warm friends” he had in this vicinity. Perhaps seeking a more lucrative practice and tired of traveling, in 1878, Dr. Smead set up an office near the railroad depot in Essex Junction. He was an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic both in Vermont and nationally. By 1891, his professional success was noted with ownership of “one of the finest residences” in town where he rented out rooms. The house is still standing at 66 Main Street. He practiced dentistry there until about four years before his death in 1919.

DENTISTRY.



**D. W. SMEAD, DENTIST,
WILLISTON, VT.**

Will operate for the year 1873, as follows :
 The first Monday of each month for one week in
 Milton.
 Monday and Tuesday of the remainder of each
 month at Richmond.
 Wednesday and Thursday at Hinesburgh.
 Friday and Saturday at Williston.
 * Please make early engagements,
 All Work Warranted, and satisfaction guar-
 anteed. dem35tf

DENTISTRY.

D. W. Smead, dentist, Williston, Vt., will operate
 for the year 1874 as for past three years, visiting
 Bristol, Milton, Richmond, and other places in
 Chittenden and Addison Counties, at stated times,
 notice of which will be given by card, each time.
 If you do not secure a card, can find when He is to
 visit your place, by making inquiries at the village
 hotel. Being prepared to do all branches of dentis-
 try in a thorough manner, he guarantees satisfac-
 tion to all. dem

Dentist Dr. Daniel W. Smead used these advertisements in the *Burlington Free Press* to announce his traveling schedule and services



The view in this post card is to the west along “Main Street” a bit past the Oak Hill Road/North Williston Road intersection with the sidewalk evident on the right. (Image courtesy of the Williston Historical Society)

Sidewalks in the Village

By Richard Allen

There is an early history of Williston sidewalks recounted in two issues of the *Burlington Free Press* in 1873. On June 28: “The people of Williston village are enjoying some new plank sidewalks, which they fondly imagine superior to anything of the kind ever before seen in those parts. We think some of visiting that village, ‘just to see how it will seem’ to walk upon a decent sidewalk.” On July 15: “The new plank sidewalks give a tasty look to the village.”

In 1922 “the ladies served dinner on town meeting day and cleared \$47.00” for the sidewalk fund. In 1924 they held a rummage and food sale, and a dance in the evening to benefit the fund.

Emerson Miles, Jr. remembered: “Yes, back in the [19]40s the village sidewalks were plowed with a horse and wooden vee plow. I believe Richard Dufresne did the plowing. He was the son of Amos who had the farm at the corner of Old Stage Road and Route 2. He would plow from Old Stage Road to Lester Johnson’s farm. He always had an audience of children walking behind him. The plow was built so it could go through the two narrow bridges by pulling a pin on each side and part of the sides would fold in. After crossing the bridge, he would stop and pull the sides out and install the pins again, in that way the sidewalks could be plowed wider.”