



Williston Historical Society Bulletin

• Volume 44, Number 1
May 2017

“Every individual is an historical figure.”

Founded 1974

S. & J. Burroughs, Editors

Save the Dates

Saturday, May 13 – 6:00PM

Pot Luck Supper at Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse

Program by WCS students

Monday, July 3

Ice Cream Social on the Green

Tuesday, July 4

Williston Historical Society Float?

Mid-August – TBA

History Cruise on Lake Champlain aboard the Carillon

May 13 Potluck Supper and Program

Join your friends and neighbors and support our Williston youth on May 13th, 6:00 PM for a Pot Luck salad supper in the old Stovepipe Corners Schoolhouse located on the town green. Students from Williston Central School will present their 3D project about the Giles Chittenden House (the home that stands at Catamount Family Center). This project was entered into competition at Vermont Tech in Randolph for the 3D Vermont School Olympiad of Architectural History. Our students won 2nd place in the Middle School division.

Bring a salad or dessert to share and your own table setting. The Williston Historical Society will provide beverages. If the evening is nice, throw in a lawn chair and enjoy eating outdoors. The presentation will begin after everyone has had time to enjoy their meal at 7:00 PM.

WHS Officers

President: Terry Macaig
Vice President: Brenda Perkins
Secretary: Marlene Price
Treasurer: Jon Stokes

Please update your email addresses and phone numbers

If you have not recently updated your email address with the WHS, please do so by sending your current email address to Bob Bradish, who is now maintaining the membership list. You can do this by sending an email to Bob at robertdonab@myfairpoint.net or by calling him at 872-8775.

WHS Needs You

WHS needs YOU! If you or someone you know might be interested in any of these volunteer opportunities please contact Brenda at brendaperkins135@yahoo.com

WHS is looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- The WHS has entered a float in the Williston July 4th parade for the past couple of years and would like to continue this year. We are looking for volunteers to plan, build/assemble, and ride on this year's float.
- We are always looking for help with our annual Ice Cream Social. Needed are strawberry pickers and preparers on the morning of July 2, Set-up, clean-up and of course scoopers on the evening of July 3. (If interested in volunteering for these tasks please contact Terry - macaig@comcast.net)
- We have multiple cassette recordings to be digitized (cassette to CD). Many home computers have this capability. The Vermont State Historical Society in Barre also has a sound lab that may be used for free to process these tapes. Does this sound like a job for you? Contact Brenda for more information.
- The interview cassettes should also be transcribed to hard copy. If you have a computer with speech to text technology and would like to undertake this task, please contact Brenda.

Report from the President

President's Report

Since our last newsletter Williston Historical Society has held its annual meeting and elected officers and board members. At that meeting we asked members to share a historical story or explain a historical artifact. This was very successful and attendance was wonderful. In April our member meeting showcased Bruce Post with a presentation on "The National Park in Vermont That Never Was".

We look forward to our next member meeting on May 13th at the Stovepipe Corners schoolhouse on the green that is announced in this newsletter and our traditional Ice Cream Social and, hopefully a July 4th float. We are also planning on a summer activity to be announced. WHS needs your help in order to make these events successful!

Terry Macaig, President

I Remember...

If you have a favorite memory about growing up or living in Williston, please send it to:

Jeneva Burroughs
momdad.burroughs@gmail.com.
or mail to
81 Peterson Ln.
Williston, VT 05495

Research in Progress: The Reed Brown Journal Describes an 1841 Journey to New York City, Washington, D. C. and Ohio



Recent photo of the last home Reed Brown owned in North Williston, now 18 Fay Lane.

By Richard Allen

In the summer of 1979, Lorraine Brown of Maumee, Ohio visited Williston, Vermont to learn more about the town that was home to some of her ancestors, specifically Reed Briggs Brown, her great grandfather. Later in 1982, she gave the Williston Historical Society the journal that Reed kept during his 1841 trip to New York City, Washington, D. C. and Akron, Ohio.

Reed, living in Essex in 1841, was compelled to take this trip for business and personal reasons. He was a blacksmith, and he had designed an improved carriage spring that needed a patent. His personal concern was his brother Nathaniel, who was in jail on a charge of burglary of a grocery store in Akron, Ohio.

So, on September 22, Reed left his wife Electa and three children, and set out on a two-month odyssey to accomplish both goals. Reed noted the dangers and difficulty of travel in that time, his triumphs, his setbacks, and the successful return to Vermont. He utilized all the available forms of transportation and was subjected to a steamboat explosion, rail car derailment, hours of a bone jarring stage coach ride, delayed canal boat passage, seasickness, blistered feet, exhaustion, and fleas.

Reed Brown's journal gives us a fascinating look into antebellum life in America through the eyes of a rural Vermonter stepping into the unfamiliar territory of big cities, different landscapes, government bureaucracies, and people of other ethnic groups, nationalities, and occupations. It also allows us to consider the challenges of travel in the United States at that time, both through Reed's experiences, and those of others making their way across the country.

The journal contains about 160 pages of business transactions and an account of the journey. It spans the years from December 26, 1837 to 1865 intermittently. Some of the business pages are covered with greeting cards, post cards, and images cut from books and magazines, turning parts of the journal into a scrap book of sorts, but interfering with deciphering the writing. The journal entries were done in neat handwriting, with variable spelling, and simple vocabulary.

Presently, I am interpreting the entries and researching to expand upon the sights, people, and places Reed mentions in his journal. It is a work in progress and some form of publication of the journal will take place in the future.

Recently Acquired Photo



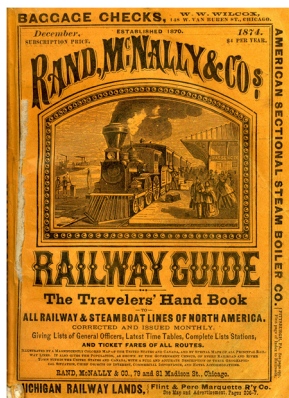
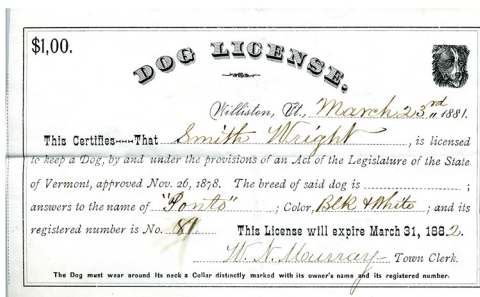
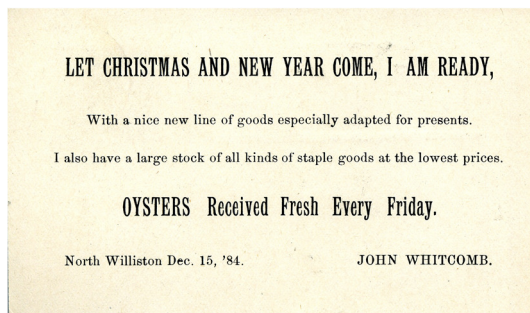
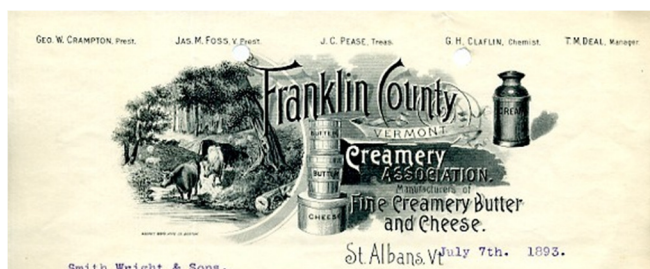
The Williston Historical Society recently acquired this post card from the 1913 parade celebrating the 150th anniversary of the chartering of the town. "Children riding in an oversize shoe, pulled by four white horses."

Ephemera from the Smith Wright Family Papers

By Richard Allen

While researching for the *North Williston: Down Depot Hill* book in 2009, Jim McCullough gave me access to several boxes of family papers that were in the attic at his house on Governor Chittenden Road. The contents provided a fascinating look into the business world of Jim's great grandfather, Smith Wright. Wright was one of the most successful figures in Williston in the 19th century. His cold storage plant in North Williston provided, eggs, meat, cheese, and other products throughout the northeast.

The following are scans of some of the papers, either related to a Williston business or just showing an artistic letterhead.



Williston Historical Society Presentation

On Sunday, April 2, Bruce Post gave an entertaining and informative presentation about the proposal for a Green Mountain National Park. This proposal was hatched back in the 1930's and the following excerpts from the Burlington Free Press website will give you a brief overview of what happened. If this subject piques your interest I would encourage you to visit the website and learn more.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2016/03/04/national-park-got-away/81289498/>

The National Park That Got Away

BRUCE S. POST

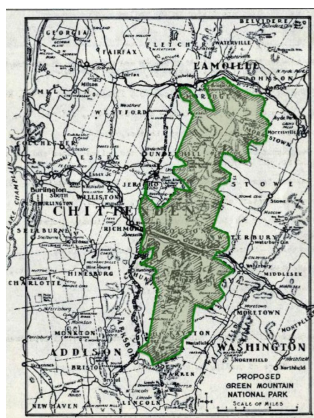
In the 1930s, grand plans for the Green Mountains were hatched, debated and rejected.

Nominally, Vermonters voted 80 years ago, in a March 3, 1936, referendum to disapprove the so-called Green Mountain Parkway. To some opponents, the road was simply a guise; to them, it was a Trojan horse. Ludlow's Ernest Moore, the House speaker — counter-intuitively — called it “an act of spoilation ... in reality a national park... with the new highway only an incidental part.”

Today, the flimsy public perception about the Parkway floats mainly on the gossamer wings of myth. Like an angler's tale about “the one that got away,” the yarn spun about the national park that got away is so embellished it bears little resemblance to reality. One contemporary teller of the tale, for example, describes the Parkway as “an asphalt highway down the top of Vermont's famed Green Mountains, every square inch of tar poured above the 2,500 foot mark” — erroneous factually and impossible geologically.

Roosevelt has a plan for Vermont

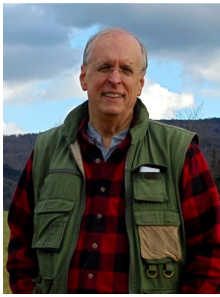
The Parkway's defeat seemed the last word. It was not. In August, President Roosevelt came to Vermont to attend a flood control conference in Montpelier. UVM President Guy Bailey rode in the presidential car and later asked the president to declare a portion of the Parkway route the Ethan and Ira Allen National Monument. FDR went one better, proposing in 1937 a 130,000-acre Green Mountain National Park running from Mount Ellen to the Lamoille River, with a parallel parkway built to the west.



Roosevelt was heartened. “I hear,” he wrote his Interior secretary, “that Vermont people are now beginning to be sorry they did not give us better cooperation.” Gov. George Aiken appointed a five-member study commission. Congressional legislation authorizing the park was introduced. Ultimately, the idea faded as war approached, perhaps dealt a fatal blow when, in 1939, Aiken approved the first ski towers on Mount Mansfield at State Forester Perry Merrill's urging. There would be no Green Mountain National Park, no Vermont rival to Yellowstone and Yosemite. (Photo: Map, National Park Service, courtesy UVM Special Collections)

A Vermont national park would have assured both environmental protection and tourism. Just look south: the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most visited unit in the National Park system; the Great Smoky Mountains, America's most visited national park. Ironically, given the population density of the Northeast, the Green Mountain National Park might likely have been even more popular.

Bio for Bruce Post



Bruce S. Post, a 1969 Norwich graduate, has worked for several members of the Vermont and other congressional delegations. He was Chief of Staff for U.S. Rep. John B. Anderson during Anderson's 1980 presidential campaign and also served as a researcher and speechwriter for U. S. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey in the 1972 Democratic presidential primaries. As Vermont Governor Richard Snelling's Director of Planning and Research, Bruce developed a comprehensive perspective on multiple issues facing Vermont. Governor Douglas named him to the State Board of Libraries in 2010, and he currently serves as its chair. He also was on the board of the Rokeby Museum and on the Green Mountain Club's history and archives committee.

Mr. Post now writes and lectures on Vermont's environmental history. He is lead author of the Mountain Manifesto and his article "The Road to Paradise Lost".

3D Vermont School Olympiad of Architectural History

On Friday March 24, a team of ten Williston Central middle school students piled into a bus and headed south to Vermont Technical College in Randolph for the 3D Vermont School Olympiad of Architectural History. The snowy trip was worth it, as the students performed well for the judges and won 2nd place in the Middle School division.

This exciting competition is the brainchild of History (now Technology) teacher Mike Hathorn of Hartford High School found his high school students became engaged and connected to local history when researching specific buildings in their town and modeling them with CAD software to print with a 3D printer. He shared his process with others across the state, and 3D Vermont was born.

Social Studies/English Teacher Aron Merrill of Voyager Team and Librarian Ellen Arapakos partnered again this year to bring this blend of local history and new technology to Williston students, and the enthusiasm was strong! After researching the Old Brick Church and School last year, Mr. Merrill selected the Giles Chittenden homestead to research and model this year. This was an excellent project for students to research for a number of reasons:

1. Welcoming owners with a sense of stewardship. Students were welcomed into the home and given a tour by owner Lucy McCullough, who shared great stories of the home's past, answered questions, and held middle schoolers spellbound with an amazing piece of technology - a working Victrola phonograph!
2. Students were allowed to walk around the grounds and take exterior measurements of the building. When students can enter exact dimensions in the CAD software, their models are better.
3. The history of the Giles Chittenden house is a good example of Vermont's changing land use (sheep farming to dairy farming to recreation).
4. A wealth of research already documented in the National Register of Historic Places registration form prepared by Elizabeth Pritchett (October 1993), a Williston Observer article by Richard Allen (April 2013), and a *Vermont Life* article.
5. The opportunity to compete at the culminating 3D Olympiad event against other middle schools.

Students prepared a slide show presentation of their research, a tri-fold brochure, a 3D model of the house in CAD software (SketchUp), and a 3D printed model of the CAD rendering. Additionally, they described the history and relevance of the building to judges at the competition.

A description of the event with photos can be seen here (created by SketchUp software representative Chris Brasher): <https://spark.adobe.com/page/e04kelDo3PcMA/>

