



WEST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2010/2011

Issue 130

ANNUAL MEETING: OCTOBER 15, 2010 Fiddling Around: Music From Our Past



Adam Boyce and Ron Neronsky

On a cool autumn evening in October, the public along with members of the West Windsor Historical Society, the Board and Trustees congregated at our beloved Story Memorial Hall in Brownsville. A scrumptious array of potluck dishes were offered to those who were eager for dinner and conversation. Who knew we are so talented in the kitchen? I have fond memories of dashing up for seconds of Bill Stillson's abundant and famous Ox Bow Chicken. To kick off the event, Leone Bushkin conducted a brief but agreeable Annual Meeting. Thank you Leone!

Adam Boyce and Ron Neronsky entertained affably with New England dance hall music from 1890 – 1960 with quite a few entertaining anecdotes. Many of the tunes were familiar spurring on a lively sing-along. We plan next time to have copies printed for those who are less familiar with these much-loved tunes. See inside for a pictorial from the evening.

-- Jennifer Knight Bodnar



Delicious homemade pies waiting to be dished out.

Harvest SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Saturday, October 16th, 2010

It was a busy weekend, with the Spaghetti Harvest Supper following the Annual Meeting – proceeds go to Albert Bridge School and WWHS. It was a delightful event on a beautiful fall evening during peak leaf peeping season. The superb wait staff and parent volunteers once again did an outstanding job.

We would like to thank the volunteers, patrons, as well as the following business for their contributions: Green Mountain Smokehouse, Black River Produce, Edgewater Farm, McNamara Dairy, Lebanon Coop and Hannaford's of Claremont.



(L to R) Jonas Kantola, Anika Abrahamsen, Falcon Jaacks, Jenna Majeski, Sofia Kantola, Lily D'Anna

-- JKBodnar

HISTORIC SUMMARY OF “THE RETIRED MEN’S BREAKFAST GROUP” -- *Frederick A. Jenks, October 2009* (Continued from previous issue)



By about 1995 Hilda sold the Lodge to the Adventure Quest School. Since the Lodge was great for our breakfasts, I hoped that we might continue to use it. I contacted the school’s principle to see if this was possible. It turned

out it was, since the classes of the school were traveling all over the world most of the year. For the next 4 years we met in the Lodge as usual. The principle also said that we could use his cook to prepare our food, and some of his crew would set up the food table upstairs and remove it when we were finished. His charge for all this was \$4.50 per person. Roger acted as the money collector and when all had paid, he would turn it over to the school’s principal.

In 1999 the school sold the Lodge to another school. This time they had classes in the building – but they were at odd times – so we were able to find only about 8 months in a year that we could meet there. In late 2000 the school was told that it had to install overhead fire sprayers. This would take 3-5 months to install, so we began to look for another meeting place.

Roger and I went up to the Mt. Ascutney hotel area and looked at their facilities. Adjacent to their main dining room was a smaller room – the Cady Room – which appeared to be ideal for our use. We then went to the owner, Mr. Plausteiner, and asked if we could use the Cady Room. Since it would be only once a month, he said it would fit in well with their use of the Cady Room. He indicated that it would be \$9.00 per person each month. We were stunned! We explained that our use of the room would be good advertising for his use of the Cady Room the rest of each month. Finally we got him down to \$6.00 per person. High, but acceptable! We left the Lodge and started having our breakfasts in the Cady Room in early 2001.

The Cady Room had tables for 4 persons – which fitted our needs quite well. They were all set up with placemats, sugar, salt and pepper, and place settings.

We had the glasses removed because each person brought their own drink to the table from the central coffee/tea unit. The food was delicious. It was put into containers along a 12 foot table with all kinds of selections, such as scrambled and fried eggs, bacon and sausages, fried potatoes, pancakes and maple syrup, toast, orange juice, sliced fruit and other various things. Quite a selection! Each month the food layout was basically the same. Quite a few fellows would go up and get a second helping of goodies.

We started our breakfast with a prayer (which I usually said) at 8:30 promptly. During the meal the waiter would remove the empty plates and silverware as they became available. By 9:00 AM or a bit later, I would announce who the speaker was (who ate free) and introduce him (or her) to the group. The room had a small platform up front where the speaker could stand so that everybody could see and hear him. We had about 25 fellows at each meeting. When the questions to the speaker were over – about 9:45 – the fellows would give Roger their \$6.00 and nametags where he sat at a small table by the entrance to the Cady Room. He would give the total amount of money to the dining room supervisor.

I was responsible for getting the speakers for the meetings. Most of the speakers were from the various towns around Brownsville. They included people from the fire or police departments, emergency action, people who made glass articles or wooden items, maintenance programs, those involved with missiles and aircraft, medical specialists, and other business operators such as the Brownsville General Store, etc. It is quite amazing how many different forms of activities are within a reasonable reach of our location so we can obtain suitable people to be interesting speakers.

The monthly breakfasts went smoothly, but by 2004 the price went up to \$7.00 per person. Actually, not too bad a price for the amount and type of food that we received.

After quite a few years, as I was getting older and more tired, I decided I had better turn the responsibility of these meetings over to someone younger and more active than I. In the spring of 2005 I announced to the group that when I turned 90 years old (that May) I was resigning from my breakfast

duties. The group understood my situation, and discussed amongst themselves who should take my place as “Master of Ceremonies.” They selected John Gregson to replace me. Roger had indicated that he, too, was in need of replacement. To do Roger’s tasks, Jim Kenyon was suggested as his replacement. I prepared a list of the things we did, so that John would be aware of all the details of the “Master of Ceremonies” job, including calling on the Mondays and getting speakers for each month.

In May of that year John picked up my duties, and Roger’s responsibilities were shifted to Jim. Both Roger and I still went to the breakfasts, while others did what we used to do. John sat at the entrance to the Cady Room with the nametags so the fellows could find theirs and wear it. These helped to enable the growing group to know each other. John would make the various announcements and Jim would collect the nametags and the money, which he would turn over to the dining room supervisor. Once in a while John would ask me to say the prayer at the beginning of the meal. As time went on, Vic McCuaig and Bob Clark offered to assist John in his various duties.

Since Roger and I still went to the breakfasts each month as we had done for years, we enjoyed just sitting and eating with the others. Also we didn’t know who the speaker might be until he was announced – quite different from what we previously used to do. In the summer of 2007 I became quite sick, partly because of a min-stroke, and I was unable to attend the meetings. Since I had to eat my breakfast soon after I got up to provide energy for my body, I no longer could eat a second breakfast by going to the meetings. Since then I have not attended any of the meetings. During that period of time Roger died in 2007. So neither of us are attending the meetings, which I understand are still going strong. Other people are doing the organizing and coordination of the food preparation duties in place of John Gregson and his helpers. I understand the price is still only \$7.00 per person. That’s great!

Please send us any anecdotes about Brownsville that you would like to share: WWHS, c/o Jennifer Bodnar, PO Box 12, Brownsville, VT 05037. We look forward to hearing from you!



MUCH NEEDED REPAIRS

– Tom Kenyon

This past year, thanks to the Community Outreach Program of the Southeast State Correctional Facility, the exterior siding of our grange hall was repaired and all four sides primed and given two coats of exterior paint. The kitchen was painted as well. The Society paid for the supplies and a modest amount for all the labor. It was the first time in recent memory all four sides of the building received a much-needed update.

However, a building inspection of the roofs has now shown repairs and paint are greatly needed to prevent a disaster in the near future. Several holes are in the porch roof and metal roof (it keeps the rain out of the museum) on the main part of the building needs to be re-nailed and painted. Several winters ago a major section of the roof was blown loose and quickly repaired in the coldest of weather. Fortunately no moisture got to the ceilings and our precious museum artifacts, memorabilia, and records.

Inspection has also shown most of the windows in the building are in dire need of work and need to be re-glazed and painted. This window work could be done during these winter months.

Again the Correctional Facility has offered to do the work during this winter and spring at an extremely reasonable labor charge if we purchase the needed supplies. The supplies are estimated to cost around \$3000 and the labor charge is \$2000. Your Society does not currently have these much-needed funds totaling \$5000.

When you renew your membership this month, or as a special donation, please consider helping us raise these funds.

Please send your check to WWHS, c/o Grange Building Fund, P.O. Box 12, Brownsville, VT 05037.

Dancing and singing to old favorites such as *My Wild Irish Rose*, *Redwing*, *Golden Slippers* and an original composition by Adam Boyce, *Lucie's Waltz*.



**DANCING
&
SINGING
TWO BY
TWO**

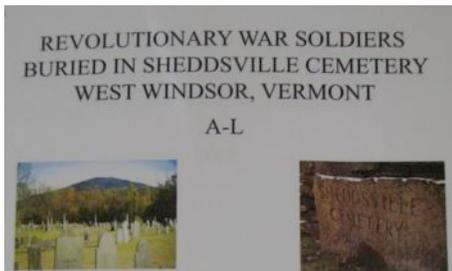


Historical Records Committee: Two Significant Donations

-- Jennifer Knight Bodnar

We are fortunate to have an active and vibrant Historical Society in this quiet village of Brownsville. Members, friends and the public have been supportive and generous. Not only does the community rally behind the Suppers and other activities, but they also provide a resource for donations, whether they are artifacts such as manufactured goods, antique furniture, musical instruments, and those of archival quality. Two significant donations in the past two years are highlighted below for your reading pleasure.

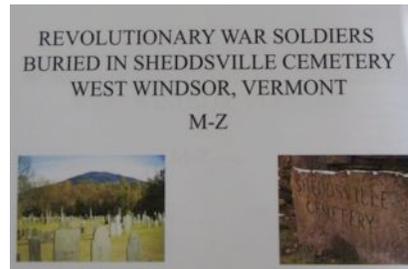
The first, a two-volume historical reference directory titled Revolutionary War Soldiers Buried in the Sheddsville Cemetery A-L and M-Z, was researched and compiled by Diane Sanborn, niece to Edson Pierce.



The research behind the Revolutionary War Soldiers was a significant effort and a

delight to be received by the WWHS. Having these 2 volumes of records of our local Revolutionary War Soldiers stored at the WWHS adds to our wealth and depth of historical artifacts and references. Researching the Revolutionary War Soldiers buried in the Sheddsville Cemetery is a significant feat, of which Diane made it a personal journey to complete for over ten years. She recalled that her family has always had an interest in genealogy and heritage. In the early 1990's, a close family friend bet her that she didn't know who her relatives were. Fortunately for her she found family records dating back to the 1600's through local historical societies and the New England Genealogical Society. She and her husband Greg both have a strong New England ancestry and they both decided to begin researching their family history

focusing on the Revolutionary War. Her family alone had over 25 Revolutionary War soldiers, 10 of which are buried in VT and 2 in Sheddsville. Her husband had plenty as well. She started to look for their gravestones by going to the Sheddsville Cemetery, and looking up their pensions located at the National Archives in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.



"While walking in the cemetery the gravestones and Revolutionary War markers talk to you. You feel like you are at

the battlefields upon reading the pensions," she remarked. She went on to say, "Generations are buried together or near each other. It's not until you do the research that you begin to see the connections between families, which families are connected through marriage, like the Bloods and the McNellys."

There are many great stories held within the pages of the directory. She encourages us to open the pages of the directory and read them. One such story is about Henry D. McNelly, (same family name mentioned above). He was a British soldier captured by the Americans. McNelly was forced to march to Boston to go back to England. He fell ill and had to recover in a small town in Western MA. It was there that the townspeople became enamored with him and once recovered allowed him to remain. He set up shop as a weaver and they traded with him. When a call to arms came, McNelly enlisted but this time for the Americans. He fought and served in Connecticut fighting against the British. Once again he was captured. He escaped his British captors and returned to Connecticut, where he set up shop again as a weaver. He later married, had 13 children and moved to Vermont, taking up residence in the hills of (West) Windsor.

Diane explains, "I learned a lot in doing this project. It enticed me to document the whole Sheddsville Cemetery and make a complete listing of all those buried there." Her passion continues as she is currently working to research a complete listing of Brownsville Cemetery 1 and 2.



The second significant donation was made anonymously by a gentleman who approached the Museum Committee when they were at the Vermont Expo in Tunbridge a few years back. He had 6 large garbage bags filled with decades of original newspapers from the Vermont Journal, dating from the mid-1850's to 1920's. They had already been digitally archived by the owner and were going to the dump. Mary Jane Arvidson remembers Ann D'Anna immediately saying that they would take them. Ann recalled, "When he asked us, I couldn't bear the thought of them going to the dump." He was from the Danville area and her daughter in-law's dad had a business nearby. He dropped the bags off and she picked them up, bringing them to the WWHS.

Currently, Mary Jane Wentworth, Hilda Conn, and Fran Cady are enthusiastically delving into the newspapers searching and recording significant articles that pertain to West Windsor. Those are being archived and catalogued.

We are pleased to provide an excerpt of one of their favorite articles below.

VERMONT JOURNAL

August 17, 1861

"GRAND MILITARY FESTIVAL AT WEST WINDSOR"

The West Windsor Guards, in connection with the patriotic citizens of that town, gave a splendid entertainment at Brownsville on Saturday

the 10th. Inst., under the direction of the following officers of the day: M.B. Perkins, Esq., President, Jonas Lamson, Chief Marshal; D.F. Hemenway, Nehemiah Parker, Assistants: E.M. Goodwin, Toastmaster: Alfred Worcester, Daniel Hammond, and thirty-four ladies, Committee of Arrangements.

The day was pleasant and at an early hour the inhabitants of the adjoining towns were on their way to witness the military demonstrations of the day.

Companies present – The West Windsor Guards, J.F. Stiles, Captain, Samuel Barnham, Lieutenant, are a fine appearing and well drilled company. Their new uniforms of blue trimmed with red, being of good material, set-off their manly and roust forms to the best advantage; while their soldier-like deportment and courtesy to their guests, are worthy of al imitation. They with the marshals were early on the ground, and received their invited guests with a cordial welcome.

The first company from abroad was the Cavalry from Weathersfield under command of Capt. Dart. Their uniforms consist of a red jacket, dark pants with a light stripe. They numbered thirty-four, and were well mounted, many of their horses being very fine. Their presence added much to the interest of the occasion.

The Windsor Engine Comp. No. 2, and the Windsor Home Guard came last. The Engine Comp., Capt. J. Fleming, Benj. Small, 1st assistant acting, appeared in firemen's uniform complete, and numbered forty members. This company, which always appears well both at home and abroad, acquitted themselves as usual, and only lacked the presence of their favorite Engine and a "fire," to have shown to the crowd their best remedy for burns.

The Windsor Home Guard is a splendid company of thirty-three boys of nearly the same age and size, from Mr. Dana's High School. Having cast off their old uniforms, they now appear in their new and substantial costume, consisting of

blue flannel military shirts, and pants trimmed with red, also military caps with red tops together with gloves of pure white. Their musical instruments, consisting of two flageolets, a large and small drum-their music so appropriate and well performed- their splendid silk banner, the birthday present of a little daughter of Hon. Wm. M. Evarts- their quiet deportment- their rapid evolutions in strict accordance with the latest and most approved tactics- their charge in "double-quick," the modest yet manly reply of Capt. Forbes, to the marshal, who in behalf of the ladies of West Windsor, presented his company with a banner- all these things must be seen and heard to be duly appreciated.

The Windsor and Hartland Cornet Bands furnished most excellent music for the occasion. These Bands are in excellent condition to furnish music for almost any occasion.

The dinner, under the supervision of the ladies, was the crowning feature of the day. The tables were set in the ample sheds in the rear of the Methodist Church, and were shaded by evergreens in the front, which added much to the coolness and comfort of the occasion, while the roast turkeys, chickens, beef, lamb etc., with an abundance of puddings, pies cakes, etc., and all got up in the nicest manner, reminded us of a regular new England Thanksgiving feast. Seats at the table were provided sufficient to accommodate 500 persons, and as these were filled three times in succession, and the tables three times replenished, not less than 1500 persons partook of a regular dinner, while the actual number who were freely supplied, could not have been much below 2000. Could the ladies of West Windsor have made such an arrangement in a grove at Manassas, on the day of battle, that well earned victory would not have been lost, but would have ended in a splendid picnic instead of a disgraceful panic.

After dinner, speaking was announced on the steps of the Methodist Church, and the President of the day introduced Honorary William Pingree, who gave an interesting expose of the causes which led to the present unfortunate condition of the country, which the speaker said were to be found alone in the curse of African slavery. *(To be continued in the next issue)*

Please consider making a donation to purchase special archival envelopes and paper to properly preserve these articles at the Grange. Please make a note on your check. Thank you.

Membership Information:

Student Member (age 17 or under)... \$5.00
Senior Member (Age 65 or older)... \$5.00

Regular Member:

- Individual... \$10.00
- Couple... \$15.00
- Family... \$20.00

Sustaining Member

- Individual... \$25.00
- Family... \$50.00

Patron

- Individual... \$100.00
- Family... \$200.00

Life Member

- Individual... \$250.00
- Family \$400.00

All donations to the West Windsor Historical Society are tax deductible. Please make your check payable to the West Windsor historical Society. You will receive a letter for you records.

Newsletter Publications:

We are grateful to sponsors who help defray the cost of newsletters. If you would like to be a sponsor, please send your check for \$25 or more to: WWHS Newsletter, Treasurer, P.O. Box 12, Brownsville, VT 05037

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Please consider receiving your copy of the newsletter via email. This will help us conserve paper, printing and mailing costs. Just email Jennifer Bodnar at: jkbodnar@comcast.net and I will add you to our email list. Thank you!

Fall Newsletter Sponsors:

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in memory of Mary (Margaret) Cabot Kerrigan

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in memory of Ed's great grandfather Dr. Edward Homer Perkins and grandfather, Karl Waite Perkins.

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Thank you!

The West Windsor Historical Society Board of Directors wishes to extend thanks to the many members and friends of the Society for their generous donations to the Expansion Fund that paid for the Architectural Designs, Land Survey, Town and Site Building Permits and Structural changes that allowed us to use West Windsor's Community Development Grant Funds for the Lift Project.

West Windsor Historical Society

P.O. Box 12, Brownsville, VT 05037

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED