



# Bley House News

Dorset Historical Society

Winter/Spring 2011 A Seasonal Newsletter

## Letter from the President

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Susanne Rappaport

### OFFICE MANAGER

Betsy Olson

### Museum Winter Hours

10 AM - 12 noon Wed.

10AM-2PM Thursday  
through Saturday

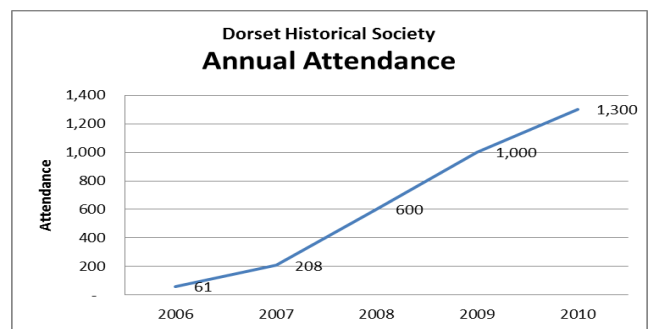
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www.dorsetvthistory.org

The Directors of the Dorset Historical Society are pleased and proud to serve the Dorset community. We are particularly happy with the exhibitions and programs of the past several years which reflect aspects of the town's varied history. We have noted that the number of visitor and member attendees is up significantly, including many visitors from outside the Dorset area. The graph reflects the growth in annual attendance. Our part-time curator is primarily responsible for this achievement, and her volunteer assistants deserve considerable credit as well. The Society is especially appreciative of two recent bequests from the estates of Dorothy Gilbert and Miriam Tiftt.



During the recent holidays, Dorset resident Chotsie Lefevre allowed us as a personal friend to display a part of her remarkable collection of Teddy Bears, for which we are deeply grateful. Many visitors, large and small, enjoyed this display.



Teddy Bears on their way to the Historical Society

Bley House and the Dorset Historical Society belong to the Dorset community, and in 2011 we will focus on events commemorating Dorset's past in conjunction with the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Town of Dorset.

August 20<sup>th</sup> will be a day of festivities on the exact anniversary date of the signing of Dorset's charter at the time of the New Hampshire Grants in 1761. The enclosed flier has further information on events planned for that day. Meanwhile, the resources of the museum's collection, the artifacts, art works, books, maps and genealogical records collected since the founding of the Dorset Historical Society in 1963 are available for everyone to enjoy.



Chotsie chats with the Taylors about Teddy Bears

*Richard Hittle,*

President

## The Curator's Notebook

2010 was another strong and exciting year for the Dorset Historical Society with a remarkable increase in attendance particularly for the on-site and off-site educational programs. The collection also grew at a steady pace with approximately 55 new gifts representing 167 individual items. The volunteer staff remains the heart of the organization and continues to be central to what is accomplished in many different areas of museum work. This past year 25 volunteers worked over 2,500 hours. Their talents, intelligence, and reliability always inspire me. DHS is very fortunate to have achieved and sustained this level of consistent volunteer support. Thank you to each and every one!

Three new exhibits continued to keep the galleries changing during the fall and early winter months. Visitors, whether from the local area or not, thoroughly enjoyed seeing some of Sandy Read's work. *The Art of Humorist Sandy Read* was followed in the Upper Hallway Gallery by an exhibit that focuses on the history of Dorset's apple orchards. It was developed from the historical society's display at the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge in June and will be in place at Bley House through the winter. The Holiday Open House finished the year on a high note with a display of Teddy Bears from Chotise Lefevre's collection.

Exhibit planning for 2011 is well underway. This is a process I thoroughly enjoy because it gives me time to explore and do research in different and new parts of the collection. One of the important exhibitions this year will be designed around the work of Edwin Burrage Child (1868-1937). Although he lived in New York City, he married Anna Sykes of Dorset and they spent much time here over 40 years, living in Dorset Hollow full-time for the last 10 years of his life. He fascinates me because of his range of styles as an illustrator early in his career and then later as a painter. He was known for his portraiture in the professional world but painted landscapes around Dorset for many years. He was also an accomplished writer and furniture maker, and remodeled his own home in Dorset Hollow as well as Gray's Tavern, which later became the Dorset Village Public Library where his daughter, Katherine, served as librarian for many years.



A Sandhog — Study of a worker in connection with life in the Under-River Tunnel Tube (NYC) Edwin B. Child



Edwin B. Child — August 1892, Dorset

Accompanying this exhibit in the Venetian Red Gallery will be more photographs of early 1900s Dorset, which again will be printed from the Hunt Gilbert negative collection. With extra financial support from members of the Gilbert family I am hopeful that the entire negative collection, approximately 400, will be digitized this year and each placed in an archival envelope. Also, with the help of family members, I plan to get more identification of people in the images.

The featured exhibit in the Main Gallery will be about the history of the J.K. Adams Company in Dorset utilizing archives and items donated to the museum in 2010 by Malcolm Cooper, Jr., the president of the company. A centerpiece of the exhibit will be some of the large drawings done by his father of early J.K. Adams products. For the most part these drawings are pre-computer and therefore each is a one of a kind artifact of great historic significance.

Since DHS education programs with Chris Hubbard's third grade class were so successful last year, she and I decided to take on a larger project with her 2010/2011 class to help fulfill the curriculum requirement for the study of local history. The culminating project will be an exhibit about Dorset's history created by the students and installed by them in the museum in May. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 P.M. for their families and friends at which time students will make presentations about their individual research projects. Heidi Stokes, a volunteer at the museum and substitute teacher at the school, is assisting me with this exciting project.

The Opening Reception for the major new exhibits in the museum for 2011 will be held on Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-7:00 P.M.

2011 is a very important year for the Town of Dorset! The Town is celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Dorset Charter on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1761. Several of us at DHS are working with the Town Committee and the Dorset Chamber planning activities for a wonderful community celebration in Dorset and East Dorset on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Our annual Ice Cream Social will be part of the day's festivities.

As always, please feel free to visit the museum at any time during these quieter winter and early spring months when many spaces in the museum are in transition. A winter project to re-design the Reception Area to better accommodate the new computer system and improve the office space and gift shop is already partially completed. There is always time for visitors.



Mettowee Valley — Oil on canvas Ca. 1925

Susanne Rappaport

## 250th Anniversary Commemorative Items For Sale Will Benefit Educational Programming at the Dorset Historical Society

Anniversaries are a time to review stepping stones to the present. As the DHS updates the Town's 250-year-old historical timeline, we are reminded of how Dorset grew from a wilderness area to an agrarian one, an industrial area to a recreational community over distinguishable and sometimes overlapping eras. The time line is an excellent source to whet research appetites into Dorset's past. The new time line and other items marking Dorset's 250-year milestone year are available during this celebration year at the Dorset Historical Society.

**Time Line and Charter:** Dorset's new time line is on sale at the Dorset Historical Society gift shop, as is a newly-printed parchment copy of Dorset's town charter after the original on file in the New Hampshire State Archives.

**Raffle Ticket Sales Are Underway:** Buy a chance to win a one-of-a-kind 16-in. X 6-in. blue and white ceramic bowl with scenes of Dorset or a 10-in. ceramic blue and white ceramic plate with a picture of the Bley House, designed exclusively for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration by Janno Gay of Flower Brook Pottery. Chances are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Drawing will be August 20 at the annual Ice Cream Social on the



Ceramic Plate by Janno Gay picturing Bley House, to be raffled August 20

Bley House Museum lawn. Tickets on sale at the DHS gift shop, Dorset Town Meeting, Farmers' Market and other locations as weather permits.



Wood Serving Board designed by J.K. Adams Co. \$35

**Wood Serving Board:** 13-in. round serving board designed exclusively for the DHS Anniversary Celebration by J.K. Adams Co., inscribed "Dorset, Vermont. Chartered August 20, 1761." \$35 at the DHS gift shop, H.N. Williams Store, or J.K. Adams- The Kitchen Store.

Public lectures and events planned for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will focus on the history of Dorset's schools, a history of the Irish settlement of Dorset

coinciding with the marble industry, new interpretations of how Vermont came into being from old maps at the Vermont Historical Society, and the showing of the recently-completed film *Freedom and Unity* by producer Nora Jacobson, parts of which were filmed in Dorset.

Please refer to the Dorset Historical Society web site for the scheduling of these events and others during 2011.



Janno Gay of Flower Brook Pottery designs one-of-a-kind commemorative bowl with scenes of Dorset, to be raffled August 20

### Save the Date

**Sunday, March 6** (3pm) "Early Dorset Schools," Dorset Church, Church St.

**Friday, May 13** (late afternoon field trip) Opening reception "Lock, Stock and Barrel: The Terry Tyler Collection of Vermont Firearms," Shelburne Museum. Reservations and info 867-0331.

**Thursday, May 26** (6:30pm) Dorset School 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Exhibit "History of Dorset," DHS museum.

**Friday, June 17** (5-7pm) Opening reception "2011 Exhibits," DHS museum.

**Saturday, August 20** (1-3:30pm) "Annual Ice Cream Social," DHS lawn.

***Come and celebrate Dorset's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday!***

## DORSET SCHOOLHOUSES

Parents and towns have always placed a high priority on education for their children. The 1761 Dorset Charter from Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire included a provision for "one share [of land] for the benefit of a school in said town." Dorset's first known school opened on the West Road in 1785. The 1869 Beers *Atlas* divides Dorset into 14 neighborhood school districts and shows the location of a school, fulfilling the needs of a growing population, in 12 of them. Schools were funded by each district until 1892 when the state mandated town-wide school systems. While Dorset adopted funding at the town level, many of the district schools continued into the 1940s. It was not until 1960 that an eight-room elementary school was constructed on Morse Hill Road, the compromise location halfway between Dorset and East Dorset. Dorset Elementary School opened with 187 pupils.

Eight of Dorset's schoolhouses remain today. All have been converted to private residences except the South Dorset School on Route 30, now home to Romano Publishing. That building retains much of its exterior and interior architecture, which together highlight its schoolhouse origins.

A DHS program, "Dorset's Schools: 1785 to the Present," will be presented on Sunday, March 6, at 3 p.m., at the Dorset Church. Come, learn about these schoolhouses and education in Dorset. Bring your curiosity, or -if you have them, -your photos and memories of attending one of Dorset's early schools.



South Dorset School on Route 30, now home of Romano Publishing

*We invite you to become a 2011 member of the Dorset Historical Society by using the enclosed return envelope. This is our only general solicitation for funds to support our operations, including our programs and exhibits. If you have already sent in your membership for 2011, please accept our thanks.*