



Bley House News

Dorset Historical Society

Winter/Spring, 2014

A Seasonal Newsletter

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MUSEUM HOURS

W-F 10 to 4, Sat 10 to 2
Corner of Kent Hill Rd. & Rte.
30 in Dorset
(802) 867-0331
info@dorsetvthistory.org
www.dorsetvthistory.org

The Holiday Exhibit at Bley House

Our Holiday Exhibit focused on model trains, which, for generations, were the highlight of Christmas mornings. The trains and accessories were graciously loaned by several local collectors who have coveted them from childhood. Date of manufacture ranged between 1910 and 1965.



c. 1910 Marklin train, displayed with its original box.

The collection on loan included a Marklin 1 gauge train made around 1910 and O gauge Lionel trains from the 1920s through the 1950s. One special train set was the sleek Flying Yankee which was based on a real train which ran in Vermont and was named "The Cheshire." Also included in the exhibit were American Flyer and Marx trains and wooden models of trains and depots. Two trains were running on their tracks.

The Holiday Exhibit was the latest in a series of annual exhibits where the Dorset Historical Society delves into an aspect of the holiday season and explores its rich history. Recent exhibits have included Teddy Bears, Winter Sports Equipment and a History of the Christmas Tree. If you have any suggestions for the 2014 exhibit, feel free to let us know!

Jon Mathewson

Curator



c. 1929-1934 Lionel Sunoco O gauge



A young visitor watches a train travel around the Christmas tree in the Venetian Red Gallery.

Curator's Corner

The history of Dorset is much like the history of every single town in Vermont: a huge migration after the Revolutionary War, wheat farming destroyed by bad weather and blight, replaced by sheep farming. Then small landholders sold their land to the shepherds who needed more land. Population decline followed, and then the Civil War. Sheep were replaced with Holstein cows and cheese factories cropped up everywhere. Then came the Great Depression and World War II. Milk cans were replaced by bulk containers, farmers sold their land, ski resorts were built and population resurgence followed in the 1960s with a return to farming, and so on. One might think that once you know this progression, you know everything people might want to know about Vermont history. My experience shows that assumption is very wrong.

First of all, every town and village has developed its own personality over the years. In his poem, "Directive," Robert Frost wrote,

*"The height of the adventure is the height
Of the country where two village cultures faded
Into each other. Both of them are lost."*

Finding out how towns and villages have changed and merged over the years and how those old ways of behavior and thought continue to affect local politics is an endless source of fascination.

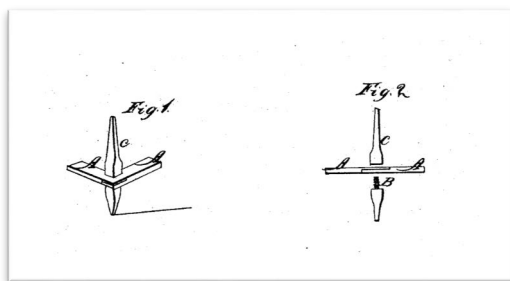
Secondly, with more than 250 years of growth and change, every Vermont town has its interesting stories to tell and bits of trivia to learn. Genealogists are always uncovering new relationships between families. One interesting bit of Dorset history I recently learned is that Philo Farnsworth's ancestors were among the early settlers of Dorset. Who, you ask, was Philo Farnsworth? He's the guy who invented television.

Right now I'm in the middle of preparing and installing the Dorset Historical Society's exhibits for 2014. Some are new interpretations of old stories. Most of the research has been done by earlier curators and volunteers. Some include newly-discovered research on topics no one has ever uncovered. For instance, in the Main Gallery there will be an exhibit on the 14 Dorseters who have received patents for their inventions. Most of these inventors have gone unnoticed by the Historical Society until now. Of course, not too long ago researching patents was a time-consuming process, but now there are on-line searchable databases which greatly facilitate the process.

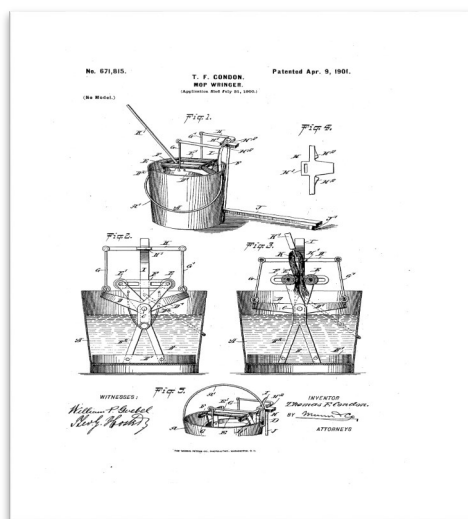
Which brings me to a request: if you have any items patented by Dorseters, chances are we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to borrow them for the exhibit. We have some, but not all. For instance, we would like bed-stays or a mop wringer. Some other examples include Hartwell Kendall's 1857 Blacksmith Striker, W.V. Wallace's 1879 Piano Casters or J.H. Gately's 1909 Winding Core. We'd really like to display some of these items.

Jon Mathewson

Curator



Laurens Kent of Dorset, Vermont received Patent #911 in 1838 for his improved Bedstead Fastening Device.



Thomas F. Condon received a patent for a mop wringer in 1901 and another for an improved wringer in 1910.

Congratulations to the DHS 50th Anniversary Raffle Winners

On December 7 at the Holiday Open House, the winners of the year-long 50th Anniversary fund-raising raffle were announced. Thank you to all who participated. Through your raffle participation, the Society raised more than \$250 for its educational programs.



Artist Brian Sweetland's sister, Mary Beth Sweetland, won her brother's painting of Bley House, which he created for the DHS in July, 2013.



Maureen and Joe VanDerwerken of Hudson Falls, NY won the bird house replica of Bley House created by Scott Thompson of Dorset and donated to the raffle by DHS director John McInerney.

New To the Dorset Historical Society Gift Shop



Note cards with ten different historic photographic views of Dorset from the DHS archives are now available. A brief description of each subject appears on the back of each card. Ten cards and ten envelopes are \$15.

Also available:

"Dorset," a history by Tyler Resch. \$50 hardcover, \$35 soft cover

Walking and driving tour of Dorset \$8

Reproductions of old Dorset maps \$8 to \$10

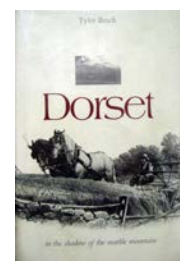
Dorset Charter \$8

Dorset's Historic Time Line \$15

Some Trails in Dorset—a hiking manual, by Art Gilbert \$10

Jessica Bond theorem reproductions measuring 14 in. X 17 in. \$35

And much, much more!



Save These Dates

Upcoming Third Thursday Lunch Lectures:

The Society's successful Third Thursday Lunch Lecture Series continues for its fourth year. Come explore many subjects and individuals from local and state history. Please bring a sandwich. Dessert and refreshments will be served at Bley House. All lunch lectures take place at Bley House at 12 noon and are free and open to the public.

- Feb. 20: "Vermont's Caves," by Roderick Pingree.
- March 20: "Vermont Legal History," by Paul Gilles.
- April 17: "Vermont Hospitals in the Civil War," by Michael Sherman.
- May 14: "Robert Frost: The People, Places and Stories Behind His New England Poetry," by Lea Neuman.
- June 19: "Colonel William Marsh in Vermont in the American Revolution," by Wilson Brown.
- July 17: "The Old Country Fiddler," a musical and historical re-enactment by Adam Boyce, in conjunction with the Vermont Humanities Council.
- August 21: "The History of New England Braided Rugs with a How-To-Make-Your-Own Demonstration," by Tracie Salmon.
- September 18: "Bears!," by Forrest Hammond, Black Bear Project Leader for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.
- October 16: "Edward Hopper in Vermont," by Bonnie Clause

Upcoming Special Events:

With the exception of Vermont History Expo, which requires a small admission fee, all events are free and open to the public.

- Feb. 19: "The M, D and G Railroad," by Bill Badger, in conjunction with the Manchester Historical Society. 7 PM at the Long Trail School.
- May 3 : Opening reception for New 2014 Exhibits. 11 AM to 1 PM at Bley House.
- June 14: Hike to Freedley Quarry with Art Gilbert. Meet at Bley House at 9 AM.
- June 21 and 22: Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge, Vermont. The theme this year is "Vermont's Art and Artisans." Dorset's exhibit is entitled, "Southern Vermont Artists and the Formation of the Southern Vermont Art Center," and is being developed in conjunction with SVAC and the Manchester Historical Society.
- June 28: Hike to Folsom Quarry with Art Gilbert. Meet at Bley House at 9 AM.
- July 12: Annual Ice Cream Social on the Bley House lawn.

Welcome to Our New Members

Shawn and Robyn Harrington	William Niles
Peter and Alexandra Langstaff	Curtis and Patricia Taylor
Anne Warner Linville	

