



Bley House News

Dorset Historical Society

Spring/Summer 2017

A Seasonal Newsletter

A Message From the President

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MUSEUM HOURS

W-F 10 to 4, Sat . 10 to 2

Or by appointment

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www.dorsetvthistory.org

Visit us on Facebook!



President John Cave (right) chats with DHS former president and founding member, Terry Tyler, at the Ice Cream Social, June 15.

This is just a brief note to say “thank you” to all our members and to the community at large for its strong support, and to give all of you a mid-year update on the many activities at the Dorset Historical Society.

To begin, our membership remains at a peak including more than 250 patrons. Membership support enables the Dorset Historical Society to continue to provide ongoing and varied activities, which include curatorial preservation and cataloging, special exhibits, specialized research, genealogical projects, community hikes, school programs, and Third Thursday Lunchtime Lectures on a myriad of topics relevant to local history.

We heartily welcome our new members: Christopher Gilbert, Stuart K. (Tim) Gilbert, Stuart Gilbert, Catherine Gallaher and Roger Goldstein, E. Martin and Virginia Gibson, Lori Hong, Steven O. Ludd, Carol Phillips, and William and Marlynn Scully, and look forward to seeing them at DHS.

We continue to look for ways to make history the most vital part of our involvement with the Society. To this end, one new feature this year or next will be an organized one-day trip to a spot of regional historical interest - an activity we hope will set a precedent as an annual event. See page 3 for more details.

Our Advisory Council meets regularly providing many suggestions and insights that build upon and contribute to the resources of our staff, officers, and volunteers. Advisory Council members include Bob Davidson, Pauline deLaszlo, Rob Gaiotti, Suzanne Hittle, Marilyn Kinney, Andrew Longacre, Nate Merrill, Heidi Stokes, Chip Stokes, and Susanne Washburn.

Jon Mathewson, Curator, and Suzanne Hittle and Susanne Washburn, newsletter editors, are reporting in this newsletter on what has been happening recently, with mention of near-term plans. I especially encourage you to visit Bley House to view the new exhibits exploring Dorset’s agricultural, commercial, architectural, and artistic histories. You will find them informative and enjoyable.

John Cave

Explore Dorset’s history with *Dorset History GO!* on your hand held device. Walk or drive through Dorset history at your leisure. Go to www.dorsetvthistory.org for instructions!

Curator's Corner

Texas, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Rhode Island, Virginia, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, England. These are just nine U.S. states and one other country from which recent visitors to the Dorset Historical have hailed. They stop by for a variety of reasons. Some are tourists with a general interest in history. Some come to research specific aspects of Dorset history, and one family from Tennessee, the Dorsets, came because the town and their name are pronounced the same way. A couple from Texas had never visited New England before and were amazed to learn that their home state was not the only state to have been an independent nation before joining the United States (Vermont, of course. Hawaii was the other one).

A British wedding party arranged to have me give them a tour of the village. Since Cecilia de Nottbeck had the Pinnacle Tower constructed to make the local landscape look more like the English landscape, I knew I had to bring them there. As they were looking at the tower in a state of shock, I asked if it reminded them of home. The groom's sister replied, "The Vermont landscape is more beautiful than ours, even with that, that ... thing." Apparently, not everyone shares Cecilia's aesthetics.

On the other side of the equation, I recently met someone who moved to the Dorset area a couple of years ago from Vieques, Puerto Rico. I was in Vieques back in 1996, and still have fond memories of the local historical society museum. I mentioned this to him, and have now learned that the museum has located to a larger and more impressive building.

Historical societies are everywhere, and there are people who have learned to visit local historical societies whenever they can because they hold and exhibit the obscure and interesting histories and cultures that cannot be found anywhere else. Also, spending time at a local historical society, DHS staff members and volunteers meet a parade of people with interesting perspectives and questions about the places they visit.

Jon Mathewson

Highlights from the 15th Annual Ice Cream Social, July 15, 2017



Mark Your Calendar for Forthcoming DHS Lectures and Special Events in 2017



Third Thursday Luncheon Lectures: Held at Bley House at 12 noon. Please bring a sandwich. Refreshments and dessert will be served. All lectures are free and open to the public.

Thursday, August 17: Michele Pagan and Judy Harwood will instruct on “Researching Your Historic House.”

Thursday, September 21: Sue Dern and Judy Harwood will lead a Dorset Village Walk.

Thursday, October 19: Warren Broderick and Ruth Greene McNally will present “The Southern Vermont Artists Database Project.”

Thursday, November 16: Jeremy Davis will uncover “Lost Ski Areas of Vermont.”

Thursday, December 21: Jon Mathewson will give a “Holiday Exhibit Talk.”

Special Events: Wednesday, November 15: Dorset Historical Society Annual Meeting, Bley House, 7 p.m.

Saturday, December 2: Holiday Open House, Bley House, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Historical Tour Options - Let Us Hear from You

The Dorset Historical Society Board is seeking to organize one-day bus trips this fall or next summer and they look for feedback from members to gauge levels of interest for suggested trips. Three trips described below are under consideration. If you would be interested in participating, please call Jon Mathewson at (802) 867-0331 or e-mail Jon at info@dorsetvthistory.org with your preference.

A

Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, VT. Round trip motor coach from Dorset and museum admission of \$65 per person. Meals on your own. Approximately 2 hours each way. Fall exhibits include opening of Dorset House (pictured below), Hooked Rugs and the Art of Dessert.



B

Fort Ticonderoga, NY. Motor coach and museum admission \$85 per adult. Optional 45-minute guided tour for \$8 per person. Meals on your own. Approximately 1.5 hours each way.



C

Erie Canal, Herkimer, NY. Round trip motor coach and two lock canal cruise. \$109 per adult. Includes tour of historic home, BBQ lunch and chocolate-making demonstration. Approximately 2.5 hours each way.



Wish List

A few years ago, a kind soul donated a digital projector to the Dorset Historical Society. Technology has passed that projector by, and it no longer interfaces with contemporary laptop computers. We need a new one for guest speakers to use with Powerpoint or other slideshow displays. The cost is approximately \$400. If you would like to donate toward the purchase of this projector, please call Jon Mathewson at DHS.

Folsom Quarry Hike



Hikers to the Folsom Quarry on June 15 pose at the scenic outlook on Mount Aeolus.

Every summer, the Dorset Historical Society leads three hikes to Dorset quarries. The Folsom Quarry, which operated from 1854 to 1855, is high on Mount Aeolus. It never filled with water, so visitors are surrounded by 50- and 75-foot walls of marble.

Maple Hill Cemetery Database Comes Alive



Our Long-Range Plan highlights the need to map the graves in the “Old Ground” of Maple Hill Cemetery. This is a two-acre section of the oldest burials that genealogists constantly roam, searching for ancestors. We have records showing who is buried there, but not where they are buried.

The problem has now been solved. Andrew Longacre created a grid overlay of the cemetery with a database linked to the GPS coordinates of graves. High school student Charlie McVicker took Andy’s database and created a searchable webpage, keying the thousands of records to the GPS coordinates on Google Map.

The upshot is that now anyone can go to the Dorset Historical Society website, search by last name, and find who is buried there and where they are. Maps showing exact locations can then be printed. Great credit goes to Airtable.com for the underlying database services.

Bequests to the Dorset Historical Society

If you are considering making a bequest to the Dorset Historical Society in your will, here is the sample bequest language to use:

I GIVE, DEVISE AND BEQUEATH TO THE DORSET HISTORICAL SOCIETY (TIN 03-0262977), A SOCIETY EXISTING UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF VERMONT AND LOCATED IN DORSET, IN SAID STATE, _____ DOLLARS (\$ _____) OR _____ PERCENT (____%) OF MY RESIDUARY ESTATE, WHICHEVER IS LESS, FOR ITS UNRESTRICTED USE.