



Bley House News

The Dorset Historical Society

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MUSEUM HOURS

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

❖ OPEN ❖

or by Appointment

Corner of Kent Hill Rd. &
Route 30 in Dorset
(802) 867-0331

E-mail:
info@dorsetvhistory.org

Web site:
www.dorsetvhistory.org

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Winter 2022

A Seasonal Newsletter

Curator's Corner – the "Long Loop"

The basic purpose of local historical societies is to preserve and present the histories of their localities. This seems fairly obvious. The Dorset Historical Society is about the history of Dorset, the Mt Tabor-Danby Historical Society is about the histories of Danby and Mt. Tabor, and so on. There are, of course, exceptions. For instance, when the Manchester Historical Society discusses the Manchester, Dorset & Granville Railroad, they talk about Dorset's marble quarries as well as Manchester's marble mills. We concentrate on our town histories, but history does not pay attention to boundaries.

Still it can seem strange moving from town history to regional history. One of our upcoming exhibits is about the "Long Loop" of the Long Trail, a spur trail which would have crossed the tops of the Taconics from Bennington to Brandon which was proposed in 1914 when the Long Trail was being built in Bennington County. This trail was never built, and I'm researching where the trail would have been, what parts may have been built, and what trails currently exist along the route of the proposed "Long Loop." Luckily, and hopefully, I can find some answers from our neighboring historical societies and trail builders.

Over the page, a 1924 hiking map of our region attests to this question →

Last Call for Arthur's Cat...

On a subscription basis, the Dorset Historical Society is making available a limited edition of bronze copies cast from Arthur Jones's last signed artwork, a plasticine sculpture of his beloved cat Tabu, fashioned by hand as his eyesight was failing. These will be ordered from the foundry in early April and cost \$1600 each. Please contact the DHS office if you have questions or serious interest.





Note that the Long Trail winds up across the “Greens” on the right but there’s scant evidence of any alternate “Long Loop” wending up through the Taconics on the left. On this map too, the beginnings of the Dorset Trail can be seen stretching from Route 30 up around Owl’s Head to the top of Green Peak (also known as Mt. Aeolus, see page 4). Within a few years the trail would be extended northward past Netop Mountain to Dorset Mountain before winding around to Jackson Peak and down into Kirby Hollow.

Jon Mathewson

Upcoming Historical Society Events

Third Thursday Lunchtime Lectures

(starting at Noon in the Museum; bring a small lunch if you want)

- February 17 Andrea Luchini: "Beyond the Beauty: Gardens & Mission at Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home."
- March 17 Michael A. Lange: "The Many Meanings of Maple."
- April 21 Bill Mares: "A History of Vermont Humor."
- May 19 Marilyn Blackwell: "The History of Women's Rights in Vermont."
- June 16 Christopher Smid: "Historic & Contemporary Slate Quarrying in Southwestern Vermont."
- July 21 Dr. Robert E. Treat, Sr., DVM: "Call Dr. Treat: Three Generations of Veterinary Practice in Vermont."
- August 18 Julia H. Casey: "Research regarding the Rupert Counterfeiters."
- September 15 Nicole Valentine: "A Time Traveler's Theory of Relativity: A Novel Set in Dorset."
- October 20 Stockbridge-Munsee Community Tribal Historic Preservation Office – Vermont: "The Story of the Mohican Tribe in Southwestern Vermont."
- November 17 Ross Conrad: "The Land of Milk and Honey, A History of Vermont Beekeeping."

Open Houses

-and-

Hikes (@ 9:00 am)

- June 4: New Exhibits Open House
 - July 9: Ice Cream Social
 - December 3: Holiday Open House
- June 11: Gettysburg Quarry Hike
 - June 25: Freedley Quarry Hike
 - July 9: Folsom Quarry Hike

Welcome, New DHS Members (Wow!)

Steve & Julie Allen • Ana Maria C. Alvarez • Dean Andersen • Toby Barclay • Roberta Bartel • Michael & Diana Bickford • Barbara Bigelow • Danielle Bodley • Bruce & Patricia Bourhill • Susan Boynton • William T. Burns • Gordon S. Calder, Jr. • Patricia Campbell • David Citron • Thomas Cooper • Stephanie deSibour • Thomas & Kathy Detchemendy • Michael Di Giacamo • Joe & Darlene Donegan • James Doyle • Rick & Tracy Falvo • Susan Faxon • Michael & Michelle Flett • Heidi Frost • John Gates • Jonathan Goodfellow • Douglas & Merrily Graham • Warren & Amy Greher • Rich & Rehana Grip • Frank & Lynn Gundersen • Richard Haas • Stephanie Haase • Thomas Hoban • Bill & Lisa Hogan • Sean & Dolores Hunkler • Ellen Kirby • Dick & Mary Jane Kittredge • W. John Kress • Rob & Jen Lehmann • Clarissa Lennox • Stephanie C. Leone • Yvonne C. Lodico • Cindy Loudenslager • Thomas Mahoney • Chris & Amy Malisse • James & Margaret McGovern • Patrick & Heather McGuire • Lawrence & Amy Mestel • Shelley V. Migrants • C. S. Miller • Jonathan Newman • Jack & Anne Parker • Joe & Karen Plunkett • Craig & Donna Powers • Robert Prince • William & Carolyn Ramsey • John & Barbara Ann Reilly • Patrick Robinson • Aleida Rodenburg • Michael Rooney • Susan Rooney • Cynthia Rosen • Anne C. Rudow • Martiak & Corby Rudow • Jim & Nancy Russell • Beatrice C. Schomp • Rache Simmons • David Smith • Tom & Sylvia Smith • Willard & Constance Smith • Chad Smith III • William & Kathleen Sowka • Scott & Mary Stevenson • Roger & Joanne Threlfall • Jill Tobin • John & Christina Tonzola • TPW Real Estate LLC • E. S. Walker • George Whaling • Sharon White • William & Roberta White • John & Mary Wight • David & Irene Wilson • Peter & Alice Wyman • Dominic & Ann Zaia

Chartered in 1963, the Dorset Historical Society collects, preserves, and interprets our community's cultural resources. As a member-based organization, your generous contributions enable us to operate and fulfill our mission, whether you're an individual, family, business, or foundation.

Please visit us at www.dorsetvhistory.org/support-us/



We are always looking for more things to add to our collections. This time around, please check to see if you have old programs for events in Dorset: playbills, church service programs, commencement exercises, that sort of thing. They may not seem historic now, but they will before too long!

Dorset's "Hitchcock" Connections

Every so often, disparate historical facts collide in interesting ways. Research for an upcoming exhibit recently revealed one such coincidence. It turns out the man who named Mount Aeolus in 1860 and the woman who made Dorset's ferns famous around 1900 never actually lived here, but were siblings.



Charles Hitchcock

Edward H. Hitchcock (1793 – 1864), a geology professor and President of Amherst College was married to illustrator Orra White Hitchcock (1796 – 1863), and they had several children. One of their sons, Charles Hitchcock (1836 – 1919) also studied geology, and served as the Assistant State Geologist of Vermont from 1857 to 1861. It was in this capacity that he led a group of Amherst students to the top of Green Peak on September 13, 1860. Once at the top, they christened the place "Mount Aeolus" after the Greek god of the winds, because the famous cave on the eastern slope of the mountain was called the Cave of the Winds.

Meanwhile, one of Edward's daughters, Ellen (1838 – 1921), became a botanist. In 1872, she moved with her husband, the Reverend Cassius Terry to Minnesota. Her book, "Catalogue of the Flora of Minnesota," was published in 1884. As a widow, she returned to Northampton where she taught at Smith College for 25 years. During the summer months, Ellen travelled and collected ferns, sometimes staying with friends in Dorset, where she discovered several rare species of ferns. She published her findings in several articles in academic journals, which made Dorset famous for ferns, and which explains why a fern graces our town's logo! An exhibition of Ellen Terry and her fern collection will open on Saturday, June 4.



Ellen (Hitchcock) Terry



And recently we've discovered yet another "Hitchcock" connection to Dorset. While re-watching the Alfred Hitchcock comedy "The Trouble With Harry" (1955), set in Vermont, your intrepid curator noticed in its local "emporium" a poster for the 1954 Fall Season of the Caravan Players at the Dorset Playhouse*... what a happy reminder of Fred and Pat Carmichael's players!



NOTE ↑↑ "ANNOUNCING THE CARAVAN COLOR SEASON • DORSET PLAYHOUSE
LABOR DAY THRU COLUMBUS DAY – PERFORMANCES EACH WEEKEND FRI • SAT • SUN"

* Go to www.dorsetvthistory.org/players/ for a database about the Dorset Playhouse.