



Bley House News

The Dorset Historical Society

Winter 2021

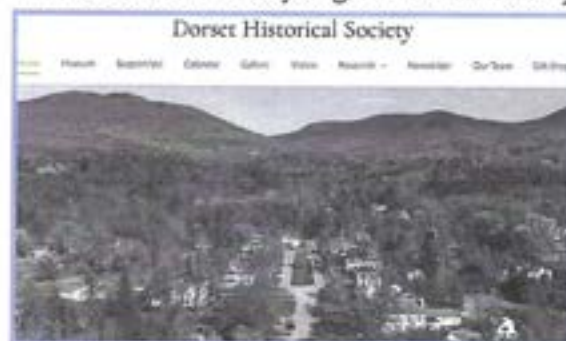
A Seasonal Newsletter

Curator's Corner: Enduring the Pandemic ... Still!

The pandemic continues to challenge cultural institutions around the world, and each has risen to the occasion in its own unique way. The Dorset Historical Society Museum is too small to abide by the Vermont guidelines for re-opening, so we continue to be closed to the public, but remain open to staff, volunteers and independent researchers, by appointment. Our popular Third Thursday Lunchtime Lecture Series was cancelled through 2020. However, one was presented via Facebook, and the video can still be seen at our YouTube channel. Also, Intern Noel Schlageter and I have begun creating a series of short videos focusing on interesting artifacts. Two are available now, with more to come. Donated artifacts continue to arrive, and research into the collections has continued. The slow, professional and volunteer work on preserving the history of Dorset persists.

Other behind-the-scenes efforts are also underway. The DHS website (at www.dorsetvthistory.org) has been totally overhauled with fresh op-

tions. The popular features remain available, plus there is now a Videos page with links to our YouTube channel and other Dorset history related videos from a variety of sources. A new and ever-expanding Photos section features a cornucopia of images of Dorset's past. Museum Store



purchases, membership renewals and financial donations can now be made through the website. Next, we'll be upgrading our list of contacts, making it easier to efficiently communicate with our communities.

We are all eager to see the end of the pandemic, and are mindful to the fact that there are several ways to define that closure. The end could be when Vermont's State of Emergency orders are lifted, or when a certain percentage of the population is vaccinated, or when a certain period of time has passed with no new infections. We will reopen, and are beginning to plan lectures, hikes, and exhibit openings for that hopefully not-too-far-off-time, when the pandemic can finally be part of our, well, "History".

Jon Mathewson

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MUSEUM CURATOR

Jon Mathewson

OFFICE MANAGER

Betsy Olson

COLLECTIONS

DATABASE MANAGER

Cynthia Elliot

MUSEUM HOURS

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

❖ Currently Closed! ❖
or by Appointment

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

E-mail:

info@dorsetvthistory.org

Web site:

www.dorsetvthistory.org

Visit us on Facebook!

Who ARE these Folks?!

In 2015 the Historical Society received as a gift this panoramic photograph of the Shakespeare Reading Group of Dorset, ca. 1920. The photograph was recently digitized and restored.



The people listed on the back of the original photograph are:

Ray McCall

Charles Harwood (1908 – 1962)

Clifford Atkinson (1875 – 1933)

Grace Dunbar Harwood (1881 – 1967)

Laura Wade (1906 – 1992)

John Lockwood (1906 – 1927)

Rod (Weeks?)

Josephine Atkinson (1892 – 1956)

Ruth Andrews (1907 – 2003) (married Robert Rudolph
in 1930)

Here's an expanded view with numbers attached to each person. Can anyone identify...



- 1) Which person belongs to which name?
- 2) Who is the unlisted person in the photograph?
- 3) Where this photograph was taken?

"On the Trail of COFFIN MAN"

The Cortland County (NY) Historical Society has recently published research by Mary L. Dexter into the career of an early stone carver Jonas Stuart whose headstones had distinctive decorations, one being a winged face on their tympanum symbolizing the departed soul. Historical records indicate that he travelled to Dorset in 1795 to practice, and teach, his carving techniques in marble instead of NY's native sandstone; now Mary's explorations have found seventeen headstones or fragments in Maple Hill Cemetery that she attributes to Jonas. One of these is the memorial for the infant Benjamin Baldwin who in 1772 became "the first who was beuryd in this yard", clearly a case of back-dating where a stone replaces an earlier, possibly wooden, grave marker.



SO we've now learned that Maple Hill's earliest burial, in 1772, is marked by a new(!) still-legible marble headstone carved by Jonas Stuart in 1795. Our knowledge of History marches On!

Planned Historical Society Events

Fearlessly (& perhaps foolishly) we have set several proposed Dates on the Calendar for traditional DHS events in the late Spring & Summer of 2021.

- ♦ Saturday, June 5, 11-1: New exhibits Open House
- ♦ Saturday, June 12, 9 am: Hike to the Gettysburg Quarry
- ♦ Saturday, June 26, 9 am: Hike to the Freedley Quarry
- ♦ Saturday, July 10, 9 am: Hike to the Folsom Quarry
- ♦ Saturday, July 10, 1-3 pm: Ice Cream Social
- ♦ Saturday, July 24, 9 am: Mad Tom Notch Hike (top half)

Understand of course, all of these dates are tentative, depending on when and if such programs can be held safely and responsibly. And, once again, this list will grow or shrink as circumstances allow.

Excerpts from "The Cochrans: An East Dorset founding family"



A side-gable Greek Revival house with the wrap around porch projects a prominent image along Village Street in East Dorset. This was the family home of the Cochran family. In 1778, John Cochran Sr. bought his first piece of real estate in East Dorset, a sale of confiscated property, "possession being forfeited by Ephraim Mattery by his treasonable conduct." For 200 pounds he bought three pieces of land totaling 350 acres, "with a dwelling house thereon."

John Cochran, a cooper, settled in East Dorset around 1820. Ira, John's eldest son, took charge of his father's considerable East Dorset properties in 1841, and began to build what we know today as East Dorset Village.

Ira Cochran was first a lumberman. He and John Manley, one of his brothers-in-law, built a lumber spout in 1849, which extended down the mountainside from today's Peru into East Dorset. An 1891 reminiscence from a Peru family reunion describes the situation this way: "A spout was made with planks, well nailed together, and 2 miles long. By these means they could get lumber to the railroads in four days, and the spout soon paid for itself."

As a Director of the Western Vermont Railroad Company, Ira advocated for a railroad line through the western side of Vermont. Knowing this was going to happen, he began building a hotel. The East Dorset Hotel, today's Wilson House, was completed in 1852. Additionally, he and Mr. Manley had a contract to provide the ties for the railroad construction.

[...by Michele Pagan, one in an ongoing series of articles written in collaboration with Ruth Stewart as they research East Dorset history to nominate the Village to the State Register of Historic Places. All the articles can be found by searching "East Dorset History" on the Manchester Journal website.]

Welcome, New DHS Members!

Mary Stevenson, board member
Patricia Campbell
Will and Tarra Ferrone
Nathan and Catherine Horne
Craig and Donna Powers

Andrew Campanella
Joseph and Jennifer Duddy
Bill and Emily Gottlieb
Louis and Laura Maguire
George D. Ross

The Vermont Curator's Group is hoping to launch a state-wide series of exhibits sometime in 2021 related to local experiences of the pandemic. The Dorset Historical Society has signed on to be a part of this project, so we would like to ask for donations of pandemic-related paraphernalia. This would include storefront signs, varieties of masks, and written memoirs of life since March 2020, or whatever else you think tells part of the pandemic story.

... Of course, please don't donate masks or signs until you are finished using them!

Jon Mathewson

Let It Snow!...

While some Dorset artists leave town during the winter, others stay right here recording Vermont's beautiful snowscapes!



Arthur Jones '53



Carl T. Ramsey '42



Claude Dem, back of the Arts Center



Russell Parks, Ice Fishing



Ada L. Davis "December"



Beatrice Jackson



Edwin B. Child, up in the Hollow 1923



John Lillie, "Logging" with Morgan Horses