



Bley House News

Dorset Historical Society

Spring 2010

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Museum Winter Hours

10 AM - 12 noon Wed. - Fri.

10AM-2PM Saturday
and by appointment

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www.dorsetvthistory.org

Letter from the President

We at the Dorset Historical Society invite all who receive this newsletter and their friends to come to the Bley House for the interesting programs planned for the coming year, all of which will follow the precedents set by our winning awards of excellence for exhibits in 2008 and 2009. Last year we had more than 1,000 visitors or participants in our programs, compared with 600 in 2008. This has been a result to a great extent of the curatorial position held by Susanne Rappaport who joined the DHS staff in 2008. The salaried position of curator is currently being endowed by the generosity of members of the board and individuals from the Dorset community and their families. The Curator's Notebook in this newsletter sets forth our programs for 2010.

In addition to the Society's scheduled special exhibits and workshops, a visit to the Bley House will refresh your appreciation of the rich and varied history of our town as depicted in the permanent collections of art and artifacts, books, letters, maps and historical records acquired by the Dorset Historical Society since its establishment forty-five years ago. We are grateful to Dorset residents and former residents and their families who continue to bestow items to the Society relating to the history of Dorset thereby contributing to the vitality of the Dorset Historical Society at large.

The Dorset Historical Society is grateful to the many participants in the Dorset Barn Census, still in progress, and to the contributors to this year's exhibit for the Vermont History Exposition to be held June 26 and 27 in Tunbridge, Vermont. Dorset's exhibit will outline the history of the town's apple orchard industry which began in Dorset in 1768 and thrived economically particularly between the years 1938 and 1950. It is interesting to note that because of Dorset's favorable geographic location where temperatures are generally two degrees colder than most

orchard locations in Vermont, the orchards of Dorset are slowly being rejuvenated. This fits Expo's theme entitled "Back to the Land Again: Heritage Ways for Today."

The Dorset Historical Society's annual Ice Cream Social on the lawn of the Bley House Museum will be held on July 24 on the precise anniversary date of the conventions written at the Cephas Kent Inn on West Road in 1776 which protested the New Hampshire Grants. The Ice Cream Social is always a fun event.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Richard Hittle, President



Dick Hittle gives guided tour of DHS collection to Mark Howard, Executive Director of Vermont Historical Society

The Curator's Notebook

2009 was a successful and productive year for the Dorset Historical Society in all areas of the work we engage in on a weekly basis toward fulfilling our mission. I want to especially thank the volunteers who contribute their time and expertise. We presently have a volunteer staff of 18, which provided over 2000 hours of work in 2009. It is a challenge to create and manage projects that fit the interests and talents of each, but I think the work accomplished this past year with their assistance has been remarkable and inspiring.

In the Main Gallery the final exhibit of 2009 ("Time Was"), installed for the Holiday Open House in December but remaining through January, was a display of European antique clocks dating from the 1700s and 1800s loaned to us by George Long. George made several excellent presentations about the clocks and their history while the exhibit was in place.

Now we are heading into 2010 with many changes in the museum already in progress. The Main Gallery will again this year be the site of the largest new exhibition that will draw from our photography collection and painting collection. I intend to showcase the photographs of Hunt Gilbert (Huntington P. Gilbert) who made pictures in and around Dorset at the beginning of the 1900s. Hunt and his sister Anna had a large chicken farm on the West Road and most of his photographs were printed as postcards. The DHS is very fortunate to have his negative collection from which large prints will be made for the exhibition. His work represents a very personal and comprehensive view of Dorset during this period. Photographs and paintings of Prentiss Pond, once the Mill Pond, will also be hung in the gallery. Other small exhibits will focus on the Manly family, some of the earliest settlers of Dorset, the local business which made the famous Aunt Maria's cookies and Peltier's Store (now the Dorset Union Store) with Jay Hathaway and Perry Peltier's roll-top desk as the centerpiece.



Dean Faussett: Powell Expedition, 1869. "The party of three who separated find an Indian encampment" Sepia drawing on paper

The Venetian Red Gallery will also change to feature the work of Dean Faussett. The DHS has just acquired five large sepia drawings by Faussett of the well-known Powell expedition into the Grand Canyon in 1869. With nine or ten men and four boats Powell set out to explore the unmapped territory of the Grand Canyon traveling the Green and Colorado Rivers. Men and boats were lost but the journey was considered a success. Faussett was commissioned by the United States Bureau of Reclamation in 1964 to recreate this journey, which he did by using Powell's extensive journals and visiting the site to follow the path of the original group. The final series is much larger than what we have but the five drawings we will exhibit are strikingly full of action and energy in the style associated with much of Faussett's work. In contrast we will also be showing three early watercolors by Faussett of quiet rural scenes, on loan to us through the summer from Gerald and Darleane Canton from Ohio.

Again we will host an Opening Reception for all the new exhibitions. This year's reception will take place on Friday, May 21st, from 5:00 to 7:00p.m.

Our events and program schedule for 2010 is well underway—refer to the "Save the Dates" box. We began the year with a wonderful new event, an Open House on January 23rd for organizations with similar goals. The purpose was to introduce fellow professionals to our museum and activities and to encourage cooperation and collaboration in our efforts. In February, Miles Bowen again offered two classes for people interested in home restoration. The first class was about doors and hardware and the second about windows and glass.

Please feel free to visit the museum at any time during these quieter winter and early spring months when you can see some of the behind the scenes work as we prepare for our busy summer and fall. Visitors are always welcome!

Susanne Rappaport



Thanks to George and Linda Long for the loan of their antique clock collection in December



Dean Faussett: Rural scene, watercolor on paper

PELTIER-HATHAWAY DESK RECALLS STORE'S HISTORY

Late last year after the sudden death of Jay Hathaway, the unofficial "mayor of Dorset," the Hathaway Family presented DHS with a desk that is a Dorset icon. Used by Jay and Terri throughout their 27 years as owners of Peltier's, the desk witnessed a great deal of the history of the store—and the town.

Twice during the Hathaways' ownership of Peltier's, Jay presented DHS programs on the history of the town's longest-running store. At the time of his first talk, in 1981, Terri and Jay were five-year owners. In 1999, after nearly 23 years of running Peltier's, Jay revealed how his perspective had broadened:

"...it has become clear that this store belongs to Dorset. No one can own something as central and key to the goings on in this community. We're simply its stewards until the next caretakers come along. Peltier's is the truest example of an institution. It has a life of its own.... Of course it has been the local market, but more importantly it has been the meeting place, the safety zone, the primary bulletin board for local events, the warm spot for children after sledding at the Dorset

Field Club, the turn around for daily walkers, joggers, bicyclists, motorcyclists, etc., the planned or unplanned meeting place to maybe sway a vote or start a ball rolling on some public issue, a place to get water for your dogs, and certainly the town crier for all the news around and about Dorset."



Perry Peltier in front of his store with an unusual contraption (seen behind) described as "the first gas pump in Dorset"

In Jay's two presentations for DHS, he told a raft of charming anecdotes about Peltier's. One was about the day the Hathaways' daughter Missy was outside the store selling apples at five cents each, while inside her parents' price was 30 cents. Among tales from Perry's time: once, when the store was out of toilet paper, the owner proposed alternatively "extra fine sandpaper" to a lady customer (not his favorite); asked, at another time, what he did when many of his customers went south every year, Perry replied, "Fumigate."



Terri and Jay Hathaway early on in their ownership of Peltier's (c. 1980)



This drawing of Peltier's by Jay Hathaway, who expressed some of his many talents in artwork and metal sculpture

SAVE THESE DATES

Sundays, Apr. 18 and 25 & May 2 (2-3:30 p.m.)
"Family History Research...Beyond the Basics"
 Linda French, Genealogist. Members \$30, Non-Members, \$40. DHS Museum.

Saturday, March TBA "Photos and Documents from the Archives of J.K. Adams Company" by Malcolm Cooper, Jr. DHS Museum. FREE

Friday, May 21, 5-7 p.m., Opening Reception for New Exhibits. DHS Museum, FREE
Four Quarry Walks for Families, Saturdays June 9, July 17 and 24, and August 4, with Art Gilbert and Susanne Rappaport. Carpool from DHS Museum. Donations welcome.
Saturday, July 24, Ice Cream Social (1-4 p.m.)
 Ice cream and family activities. FREE

For updates on events or for membership information go to www.dorsetvthistory.org

Expo 2010

The Apple Industry in Dorset—Past and Present is the topic of the Dorset Historical Society's exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society's Exposition this year, to be held in Tunbridge June 26 and 27. The DHS is seeking any historic tools and equipment, advertising materials, maps of orchards and photographs related to Dorset's apple industry, including

cider making, to be lent to this exhibit. All items will be returned to the owner and photographs can be scanned. Please call Susanne Rappaport at the DHS (802) 867-0331, if you have items to lend to the exhibit. Volunteer help is welcome during the preparation and/or the exhibit.

Membership

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT .

Please enroll me at the level indicated: *(please check one)*

Enclosed is my check, payable to **Dorset Historical Society -Membership**

Membership runs from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31

Regular - \$35 Supporter - \$50
 Sustaining - \$100 Patron - \$250
 Benefactor \$500 Other \$ _____

MAIL TO: Dorset Historical Society PO Box 52, Dorset, Vermont 05251

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