



Bley House News

Dorset Historical Society

Summer 2011

A Seasonal Newsletter

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Museum Summer Hours

10 AM - 12 noon Weds.

10AM-4PM Thurs—Sat.

& by appointment

802-867-0331

802-867-0412 FAX

info@dorsetvthistory.org

www.dorsetvthistory.org

~New Exhibitions for 2011~

Opening Reception for Friends and Members

Friday, June 17th 5:00—7:00 pm

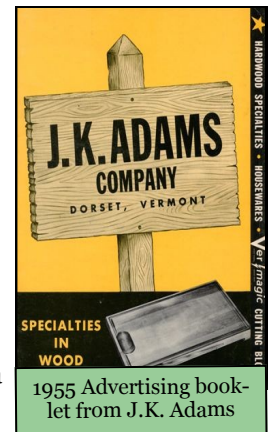
Curator's Notebook

New Exhibits

Again this spring there will be many new exhibitions in the museum, which will run through the calendar year. The work of illustrator and painter Edwin B. Child, discussed in the last newsletter, will be featured and a permanent Hunt Gilbert photography area will be introduced. Images from the Dorset collection will rotate from time to time as more of his four hundred negatives are printed and prepared for display.

Another exhibition will focus on the history of the J.K. Adams Company. Josiah Knowles Adams started the company in 1945 and was joined by Malcolm E. Cooper, Sr. in 1948. For over sixty years the company has manufactured wooden products of exceptional quality employing today more than fifty people. The heart of the story for me is about the relationship between Malcolm E. Cooper, Sr. and his son, Malcolm, and the relationship they have sustained with the community. "It became apparent to me what a significant impact a company such as ours has had and continues to have on a rural community such as Dorset, Vermont. Paying taxes, utilizing natural resources as well as goods and services are significant, but I have come to believe, as Joe Adams realized many decades ago, that the single most important contribution a local business makes is to provide meaningful employment in its own community." (Malcolm E. Cooper, Jr.)

In order to help celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of Dorset's charter on August 20th, 1761, some of the oldest documents and artifacts in the collection will be displayed. Coins made in the 1790s at Harmon's Mint in East Rupert will be shown alongside a group of obsolete bank notes from Vermont and surrounding areas on loan from Hank Westphalen and Terry Tyler. An extraordinary map of Vermont (1796) made in Germany for inclusion in an atlas and a gravestone rubbing of a 1790s stone in Maple Hill Cemetery will be exhibited. Perhaps the oldest artifact in the collection, a projectile point from the pre-settlement era that was found in a swampy area in Dorset, will also be shown.



From the Curator's Notebook (cont'd)

Materials from the Dorset School's third grade Dorset history project will be displayed throughout the museum. The exhibit's title, "Now and Then: 250 Years of Dorset History" was created by the students. They have developed the ideas and made everything in the display during the entire school year. Chris Hubbard, the teacher, and I had many goals in mind while working with these young historians in the age of technology. We wanted them to develop a sense of time and change in their community and to understand the importance of an original artifact, object or photograph and how to handle one and learn from it. We wanted them to learn about research in a museum setting and how to assemble materials for a display in a way that educates those who come to see it. "Following the third grade curriculum, students explored when and why the town was established, how geographic features influenced the settlement of Dorset, as well as who the early settlers were and where they came from. They looked at how the town has changed over time and what has stayed the same." (Chris Hubbard)

The students have made time lines, relief maps, replicas of Fenton pottery and written stories based on Dorset postcards. After taking a close look at the architecture of buildings they created painted "snow globes" of various historical buildings in the area. They inquired about their own history and how they came to Dorset, and envisioned what Dorset may be like in the future. For each student, the culminating project was to research and photograph a site in Dorset or East Dorset and write about it. All these projects and more will be on exhibit. This display has been partially funded by a grant from the Jefferson Legacy Foundation.

Please come into the museum and enjoy the New Exhibitions for 2011 – Opening Reception is Friday, June 17th from 5:00 to 7:00 P.M.



Third graders looking at marble wall made to direct water toward the marble mills in East Dorset

Looking Ahead

I will be retiring at the end of June and look forward to working with my successor, Jon Mathewson, from Middletown Springs, to create a smooth transition. The support of the Board and the remarkable work of the volunteer staff have made my three years in Dorset a very positive professional and personal experience. I especially want to thank Pat Carmichael, Art Gilbert and Terry Tyler for being such great teachers and hard workers. We are quite a team! I will remain for some time as an adviser and volunteer concentrating on collection work, and I think I can still accomplish quite a bit in this new role. Jon has been a colleague and friend for many years and I know with his new energy and vision he will continue to build this fine organization in many positive ways.

Susanne Rappaport, Curator



Third graders on village walk in Dorset

Save these dates!

- * **Friday, June 17 5:00-7:00p.m.** Opening Reception: "New Exhibitions—2011"
- * **Saturday, July 9 9:30-noon.** "Quarry Walk" Carpool from DHS. Donations.
- * **Saturday, July 23 9:30-noon.** "Quarry Walk" Carpool from DHS. Donations.
- * **Saturday, July 30 9:30.** "Notable People in 1st 50 Years of Dorset." Tour of Maple Hill Cemetery with Linda McGinnis of Barrows House. Meet at DHS.
- * **Saturday, August 20 1:00-3:00p.m.** "Ice Cream Social" on DHS lawn. FREE
- * Watch for announcements of Dorset & E. Dorset "Village Walks"

Reading Dorset's Time Line

Anniversaries are a time to revisit the past and review steps to the present. Reading the Dorset Historical Society's newly-updated Time Line, entitled "Charting Dorset's History," along with Zephine Humphrey's "The Story of Dorset Vermont," is an enjoyable and insightful overview of how Dorset became what it is today.

Dorset's early history exposes the fortitude of early settlers, only six families in all in the 1760s, in conquering a dense, damp, moss-ridden and thick pine forest covering valleys and mountaintops. It was an area which Benning Wentworth called "the wilderness" and which Dorset's charter's grantees never visited, preferring to lease 50-acre plots with an annual rent to unsuspecting settlers. These settlers, compared by some historians to the strong-willed Western movement visionaries, overcame outside influences from Yorkers, anticipated and coerced incursions from British soldiers while taking on clearing the land, seeing possibilities through the harsh terrain. Dorset's advantageous geographic location on a narrow bridle path route stretching from Shaftsbury and Arlington on to Danby, Rupert and Salem, NY, allowed for commerce. Families rallied to help one another and garner livelihoods in cottage industries from all of Dorset's resources beyond basic farming and husbandry, including comb making from horns of cows, felting hats from Merino wool, hide tanning, and lumber milling. These home industries expanded to include shoe making, harness making and potash businesses along well-traveled routes.

Aspects of early scenery in Dorset can be seen today in the eight-mile hiking path which was built around 1860 starting at Mad Tom Road in East Dorset and leading to Peru. Although now forested with mostly deciduous trees and not evergreens, this path resembles the east and west roads of Dorset as they appeared in the late 1700s, mere 12-foot wide bridle paths allowing one carriage. The importance of horses required blacksmiths, some four in all by 1800. Dorset's commercial center grew in the area around the corner of the Dorset Hollow Road, referred to in history as only "The Corner." When Dorset's mountains uncovered their marble treasure in the early 1800s, the population soared to 1,000 inhabitants and commerce expanded. As the bucolic landscape was exposed and manicured, summer residents and artists came, increasing the town population to more than 2,000 inhabitants.

These stories and others can be revisited in greater detail at the Dorset Historical Society, where a newly-created 250th Anniversary exhibit will highlight objects from the Society's collection spanning Dorset's history. A newly-printed copy of Dorset's charter on parchment is on sale at the Historical Society along with the time line. Items for sale surrounding the anniversary celebration, including raffle tickets for the 250th Anniversary commemorative plate and bowl, are listed on the DHS website under "250th Anniversary." Proceeds will benefit educational programming at the Dorset Historical Society.

The Dorset Historical Society urges you all to revisit Dorset's history at the Bley House Museum throughout the year and attend the reading of the charter on August 20 followed by a town photograph on Dorset Green. Special events, including the raffle drawing for the commemorative bowl and plate, will take place at the annual Ice Cream Social on the Bley House lawn in the afternoon of August 20. Come one, come all!



The Dorset Historical Society celebrates the birthday of Pat Carmichael, longtime member of the Board and dedicated volunteer

WE THANK THESE NEW PARTICIPANTS IN OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Michael and Diana Bickford

Bruce and Patricia Bourhill

Timothy J. Burke

Margaret Canavan

Henry D. Chandler

James and Rhea Clark

Gail Coghlan

Jim and Cathy Comar

Peter and June Davis

David and Katherine Dickenson

Greg and Sandy Downs

Keith and Andrea Ellis

Robert and Nancy Faesy

Jeffrey and Mundy Gilbert

Frank and Lynn C. Gunderson

Marybeth Heartfield

Virginia Labbe

Neil Landres

Henry and Phyllis Lee

Clarissa Lennox

Stephen Lessing

Alan and Terry Lindsey

Steven and Nancy Ludlam

Mary Lynch

Cynthia MacDonald/George Deets

Patrick and Bonnie McBride

Keith and Patricia Michl

John Niles

Nicholas Niles

Stanley Piontek

Michael and Barbara Powers

Herman and Adele Raspe

Robert and Laura Reynolds

Simeon Rollinson II

Lee and Susan Romano

David and Marlene Skulnik

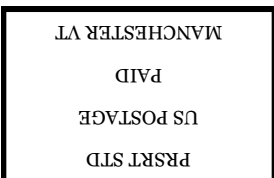
Roger and Gay Squire

William S. Sterns III

L. Grant and Judith Whitney

John Woodruff

See our web page at www.dorsetvthistory.org for information on membership



DORSET HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ROUTE 30 AT KENT HILL ROAD
PO BOX 52
DORSET, VERMONT 05251