
Thompson Historical Society Newsletter

We're on the web! Visit us at: www.thompsonhistorical.org

March 2012

2012 Board of Directors Meetings will be held at the Thompson Library, Community Room 3, 7 pm:

April 25, 2012
Annual Meeting Date TBD

In this issue:

- ◆ BOD Meeting 1
Dates
- ◆ Membership Info
- ◆ Society Info
- ◆ Society Correspondence

- ◆ President's Quill 2
◆ Newsworthy
- ◆ Presentation: The Early Years of Marianapolis

- ◆ Access to the 3
Census of 1940

- ◆ Presentation on the 4
Civil War
Tourtellottes
- ◆ John Proctor's
Collection of Civil
War Letters

- ◆ A. Vito & 5
Company, General
Contractors
- ◆ An Early Business
in West Thompson

- ◆ An Interesting 6
Letter (Putnam
Separates from
Thompson!)

- ◆ The Old 7
Connecticut Path

- ◆ Q&A 8

Society Correspondence

Since many of our members' ancestors also worked in the town mills, this recent request from New Zealand may be of high interest to you. Please share any information you may have with the Society: jiamartino@charter.net.

"My name is Mary Granfors and I am writing from New Zealand. We are originally from the U.S., but moved here four years ago for my husband's work. I am researching my grandmother's life and am wondering if you can help me. Her name was Elisima Trudeau, born September 21, 1911 in N. Grosvenordale. She married Memet Sheriff in 1927. They both worked the mill at N. Grosvenordale until its closing. They then moved to Taftville and worked the mill there. Memet immigrated from Albania.

I am trying to find out what their life was like for mill workers at this time. What kind of work did they do? What was their typical day like? I believe Memet was a "doffer" does anyone know what this is? (THS: see pg 4 for answer.)

My grandmother passed away a few years ago and my parents are gone as well. There is no one to ask about their history. My mother and I started gathering things in the past few years, but my grandmother would barely tell us anything about life back in the early 1900s in CT. Any information that you have or any lead you can send would be greatly appreciated."

Membership/Dues Information:

Members can find their paid status on the address sticker of this newsletter. (Membership runs on the THS fiscal year; July 1 to June 30.)

Thompson Historical Society
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 47
Thompson, CT 06277

Contributing Membership: \$25.00

Individual Membership: \$10.00

Family Membership: \$15.00

Members are invited to purchase first-year memberships for new members for \$5.00.



Society Contact Information

President: Joe Iamartino
Vice President: Burton Rhodes
Treasurer: Susan Vincent
Secretary: Mark Snay
Directors: Karen Cole, Dave Babbitt, Rob Paton, Lynn Landry, Joe Lindley, Jon Brynga, Lucille Barrette, Blair Cole, John Rice, David Eddy

President's Quill

Joe Iamartino



Friends,

Another New Year! I was just getting going on the last one and whoooosh...it was gone. Still, I am grateful for a caring wife, good friends, my health, a wonderful family, a meaningful job, and for this fascinating town of Thompson. Thanks to the many THS volunteers, especially those who work at our Museum Shop, and for all who support our Society in so many ways.

A couple of items to mention. First, I would like to invite people to submit their historic digital photos to jiamartino@charter.net in either .tif or .jpg format and we will post as many as we can on our new website section at:

<http://www.thompsonhistorical.org/Collections.htm>

Check out some of the photos already posted.

Please be sure to mention if you want your name included on the website under the photo caption.

We were notified by the Last Green Valley that we were selected for their 2012 Grant Program. Our grant proposal is to put many of the photos and documents in our various collections on the THS website. To me, there is nothing worse than a history hoarder...a person who keeps that special box of old photos or old letters locked away and covered in dust. Who knows what great images or great historical observations might be sitting in someone's upstairs coat closet!?! We will use this generous grant to show the great history that Thompson has, and is still making every day.

Stay tuned as the results of this website effort will be seen by mid-Summer 2012.

Stay warm, stay well...Joe

Ladies, following last year's Historical Society's annual picnic or the 'Twilight in the Country' event, a certain piece of jewelry was found on the Vincent's Greystone Farm property. If you can describe your lost article, we'd love to return it to you. Call Val at 860-923-3776.

Newsworthy

From the archives of the Killingsly Historical Society,

Windham County Transcript articles from the past.

Supplied by our friend Marilyn Labbe

October 22, 1908—Thompson

Killed by the Trolleys. Calix St. Germain, aged 40, of Oxford Avenue, Webster, Mass., was instantly killed by a northbound car a mile and a half north of Buckley's crossing, near North Grosvenordale, at 6:45 Sunday evening. St. Germain, who was in company with his two brothers, stepped close to the track to signal the motorman to stop. The track rounds a curve at the point where the accident occurred, and the car was within twenty feet of St. Germain when he held up his hand for the motorman to stop. St. Germain was standing close up to the rail and before speed could be slackened, the car hit him. He was thrown into a ditch beside the track, striking his head against a stone, and died instantly. The body was taken to his home in Webster. Motorman Williams of Dayville and Conductor Davignon of Wauregan were in charge of the car.



A Presentation on "Norman Bruce Ream, John Wesley Doane & the Early Years of Marianapolis" by Joseph Iamartino at Marianapolis Preparatory School: May 23, 2012, 7 pm.

While the Doane home and the Ream mansion are no longer standing, these estates greatly affected the village of Thompson Hill and the early years of Marianapolis. Based on new research, this 1 hour 15 minute presentation will include more than 40 photos.

The 1940 Census: Excerpt From the Weekly Genealogist, Vol. 14, No. 49, Dec. 7, 2011

The online debut of the 1940 census is now only months away. At 9 a.m. on Monday, April 2, 2012 the National Archives will make the census available for research.

The 1940 census will provide some challenges for researchers used to typing a name in a search box and immediately locating an ancestor and place of residence. There is no index to the 1940 census. The National Archives has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on the census that you can access by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/faqs.html>.

There it is noted that in lieu of an index, you can locate people by identifying the enumeration district (ED) in which they lived in 1940 and then browsing the census population schedules for that district.

If you don't know where an ancestor lived in 1940, you can follow the suggestions on the *Start your 1940 Research* page at: <http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/start-research.html>.

1. Make a list of all the people you want to look for in the 1940 census.
2. Determine their addresses using sources such as city directories, 1930 census information, and World War II draft records.
3. Identify the enumeration district for each address. Follow the steps provided online to search 1940 census maps for enumeration district numbers and descriptions. You can also try the search utilities, (<http://stevemorse.org/census/>) which will allow you to convert 1930 EDs to 1940 ones and search for 1940 EDs by using addresses or locations.

On his website, Mr. Morse speculates that a complete name index to the 1940 census will be available about six months after the census is released. So if some of your ancestors prove elusive, other search options will become available over time.

Steve Morse's 1940 census information page contains numerous strategies for locating ancestors (<http://www.stevemorse.org/census/1940census.htm>) using his free One-Step tools (<http://stevemorse.org/>) and a source checklist that might yield 1940 addresses. Mr. Morse also provides useful background on the 1940 census. For instance, there were several new and interesting questions in 1940. Some examples are name of informant (so you can see if the information was provided by someone knowledgeable), highest school grade completed (to see if education level affected whether or not a person had a job in this recessionary period), country of birth as of 1937 borders (because the borders of Europe were changing fast and furiously in 1940), place of residence in 1935 (to see how migratory the population was due to the recession and great dust bowl of the 1930s), and income.

You can view a clock that is counting down the days, hours, minutes, and seconds until the census opening and a wealth of information on the 1940 census on the National Archives website (<http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/>).

Good luck and have fun researching your family history!

The Tourtellotte Family during the Civil War

Collection of Civil War Letters Available on our Website

Recently, a presentation on the Civil War careers of Dr. Francis Tourtellotte, United States Navy, and Brigadier General John E. Tourtellotte, United States Army, was presented by Joseph Lindley at Tourtellotte Memorial High School.

Dr. Tourtellotte, the benefactor of Tourtellotte Memorial High School, joined the Navy in 1863 and was a ship's surgeon on a "man-of-war" until the war's end in 1865. He saw many battles. After the war Dr. Tourtellotte joined the regular navy and sailed around South America, through the Straits of Magellan and was stationed in Chile.

His brother Brevet (a commissioned officer holding a higher rank temporarily, but usually without receiving the pay of that higher rank) Brigadier General John E. Tourtellotte rose to the rank of Colonel and commanded the 4th Minnesota Infantry, a unit that distinguished itself in many Civil War battles in the Western Theater.

"Uncovering the Tourtellotte's Civil War story has been an exciting project," states Joe Lindley of the Historical Society. "Neither man had surviving children so we lost that connection that could carry on their story. Both men had remarkable military careers with General Tourtellotte finishing his twenty plus years in the army as General William Tecumseh Sherman's chief of staff."

The historical society has uncovered personal letters between General Tourtellotte and General Sherman that confirms a deep friendship existed between the two men.

The lady from New Zealand didn't know what a 'doffer' was (page 1). According to a Google search: "The role of a doffer is to remove empty spindles or bobbins from machines in a cotton or textile factory and replace them with new ones."

Read more: [What Are the Duties of a Doffer? | eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com)

Historian John Proctor has kindly given the Thompson Historical Society permission to host his collection of letters from Civil War soldier (and Proctor relative) Private Henry Washington Brown.

Go to: www.thompsonhistorical.org/Collections.htm and learn what the war was like as told through the pen of the young East Thompson native and his relatives.

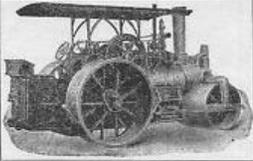
It is an exciting and interesting way to relive those days of war that started some 150 years ago.

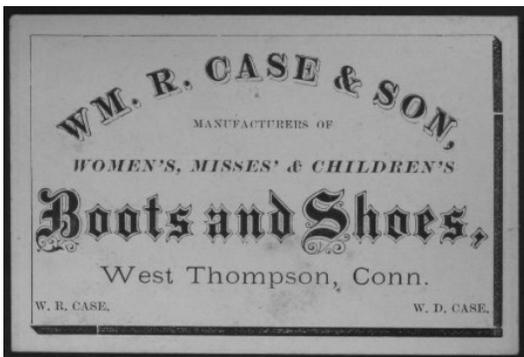


ABOVE: Private Henry Washington Brown

A quick search on Google Images will show you a wide variety of pictures of 'doffers' - the majority being children. Copyright laws prohibit us from reproducing here, but we encourage you to check out these fascinating photos for yourself. Perhaps one of our readers might have a photo of a 'doffer' in our local mills?

Early Thompson Companies: Vito & Company, and Case and Son

 LOUIS MARLOW, President. EDWARD MARLOW, Vice President.	H. Vito & Company General Contractors. Telephone Connection.	 A. VITO, Treasurer. TONY LEO, Secretary.
---	---	---



ABOVE: Vito's equipment putting down the road in front of Tourtellotte High School ca1914. Note the trolley tracks to the left of the new road. (Photo donated by B. Pompeo.)

LEFT: An early business in West Thompson. Thompson, Woodstock, Dudley, and Webster produced thousands of shoes per year for a good many years. William Case & Son is one of many firms that existed in the late 1800s.

From the archives of the Killingsy Historical Society, Transcribed as Written

Letter from your sister Mercy to her brother N. Richardson. Thompson, July 6, 1856

Dear Brother, I have received your letter in due season and was very glad to hear from you once more and know you were in comfortable health hoping you may all enjoy health and prosperity for many years to come but we are all old my brother you are the youngest and you count sixty in a few days more and then were will be five of us between sixty and seventy years of age. I will put down the exact age of us all as I know the day of the months and even the days of the week that we were born and then I would like to have you sum it all up and it will count some hundreds and if you can't get it right get some one that is good in figures to assist you and then if you think proper put it in the Almont paper and send me one as you never have sent me any. I ask that as a privilege to see how it will read. I once had the record of our ages but I can't find it since I lived here. I was born in the year 1786 and the rest I do not remember but you get it from what I shall put down on the other side. You will see that all came along quite fast one after the other. So you will think I began my letter rather queer but I thought if I left it all for last some of it would get crowded out and now I will say all the news I know if. I will start on the weather first, we have had a cold backward spring and a good fire was good company until the middle of June and since then the weather has been extremely hot and verry little rain until last night, we had nice still rain. It stoped at sunrise this morning and about half past twelve it commenced again and bids fair for a heavy storm and everything seems to grow on the run. I never saw corn and potatoes grow as fast as they have the last week. Don't hear much about hay but think it won't be verry stout. Brother Josephs widow come in for a pension and I am glad for her sake. She will need it. I don't know the amount that it will be. Adalines husband has not left California yet. I expect they are all well at Jonathans but I have not seen more of them verry lately. Mr. Perry and wife were here three weeks the day. All well and Mr. Perry has renewed his age ten years since you saw him so his wife says and the best news I have to tell you is they are putting a stop to the rum holes about here when Main put a stop to the rum selling. It drove them all into Massachusetts and when they put a stop to selling they all poured into Connecticut and from here they fled for New York and between New York and Michigan. Hope they may be drove into the lakes. There is now and then one don't intend to go but they are followed so close they are rather shy, but enough of this. Emily Laro? has got a son. His name is John I think. Mr. Laro will feel proud of it. Mrs. Bowens health is about the same as when you was here and also Mrs. Wakefield gets a pension to. You say you are building a new house this summer. I hope it will be a good one and I wish it was near enough that I could have one room to live in. I hope you will make all possible speed so as to come here this fass as you thought of doing. Do come if possible. My health is verry slim? and has been ever since last fall. I had almost forgot to tell you that Thompson has met with a great loss. There is great mourning with one party while there is rejoicing with the other. Thompson has lost a part of herself from Woodstock line along the Quinebaug a strip that takes in the Larned? neighborhood and so on within half a mile of Quadic south and from there to Rhode Island line it takes in the Jesse Whitmore place and Killingly has met with a greater loss yet and Pomfret lost a slice and they tried hard for a spell to take part of Woodstock and now they worst part of it is they have all the bridges on Thompson to build and repair. They call for half the town house and part of the poor farm and every thing that is town property. They feels so gay about it they fired away five hundred dollars worth of powder on the fourth. **They call the new town Putnam.** I had a letter from Saunders Richardson lately. All well there. He has bought him a lot of land in Ioa (Iowa?), priary? land. He will be at the falls this summer again. I don't hear a word from Brother Colwells since the beginning of winter. They are slack about writing.

July 8 – Well our storm is past and we have had a real soaker. I think the well with fill with water now. The air is nice and cool today. When I began this I intended to write one to Franklin and put them both in one envelope but I have written so much over paper than I expected and I dare not put no more paper in for fear of double postage but shall write soon. Pleas say to Daniel W. he owes me a letter and now I must close and bid you good knight for it is almost dark. With my love to all and of course you will excuse all my mistakes.

This from your sister Mercy to her Brother N. Richardson.

The Old Connecticut Path

Friends, I was contacted by Jason Newton (oldconnecticutpath@gmail.com) concerning his quest for more information on the Old Connecticut Path.

He wrote, "I have been following the route laid out by Larned in her map of "Ancient Windham County." I have found other sources that essentially agree with her route and provide more detail so that the Path can be plotted. I am just in the process of posting the maps and some field notes on the Old Connecticut Path website.

<https://sites.google.com/site/oldconnecticutpath/move-1/2-3-treasure-maps>

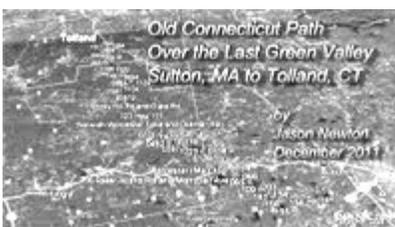
I've given top billing to Ellen Larned with supporting roles for Herral Ayres, Charles & David Chism of Westford, and Lloyd Williams of Woodstock. In addition to Larned's map, I've included town maps from Petersen 1850 and USGS topo maps from 1944-46 to illustrate the route of the Old Connecticut Path based on my field explorations. I will also be posting maps of the turnpikes of Connecticut which seem to have been adopted by some as showing the route of the Old Connecticut Path. These routes may have been chosen later after King Philips War and settlement as easier routes to establish roads with bridges. Larned's high country route would be less favored as a road, but was well suited as a walking and bridal path.

I plan to do more field exploration and research this spring. I expect to focus on Dudley/Thompson where the Old Connecticut Path met with the Bay Path, the route across Tolland, identifying places to walk/hike that would be open for the public, and to gather more photos/videos for the website.

I'd be glad to share any materials or developments with the Thompson Historical Society.....Regards, Jason"

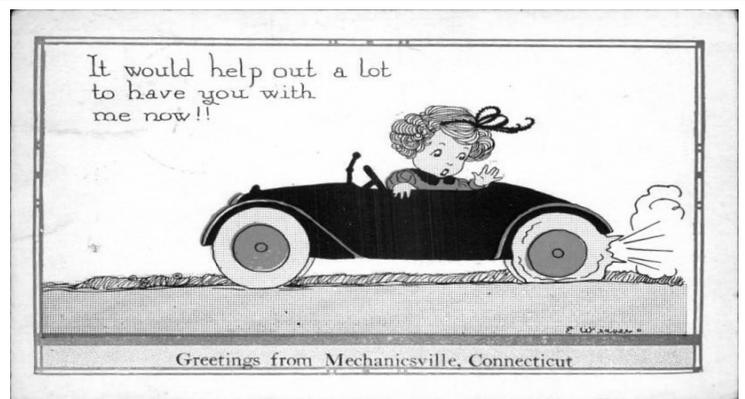
Jason's great interest in the topic combined with his use of video and web technology is something I admire very much. A focused researcher, like Jason, intent on sharing information with all, is to me the best type of historian. The other extreme, the "Historical Hoarder" - too afraid to reveal what they have or what they know, can just go pound sand. I am more than happy to promote grass roots research by amateur historians like Jason.

Remember the meaning of "amateur" too. The FreeDictionary.com mentions that the word "clearly descended from the senses of the word's ultimate Latin source, amtor, 'lover, devoted friend, devotee, enthusiastic pursuer of an objective'..." Keep up the good work Jason!
~Joe Iamartino



From the website above, there is an excellent "flyover" YouTube video of the Old Connecticut Path from Sutton, MA to Tolland, CT.

The video (and additional interesting videos from Jason Newton) can be seen at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x-gD5HYJbk>





The Thompson Historical Society
P.O. Box 47
Thompson, CT 06277
www.thompsonhistorical.org
Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
PUTNAM CT 06260
PERMIT NO 703

Q & A

Q: The names of roads intrigue me. Can you tell me the story behind County Home Road (Route 21)?

A: County Home Road was named for the orphanage (also called County Home) that once sat there. After many years of service, the building was sold and eventually taken down by the Lithuanian Catholics that now occupy the property.



Q: Where did Buckley Hill get its name?

A: I believe that the name came from the hotel James Buckley had established on the same road. (Joe I.)

Some information from an old biography: James Buckley was born in 1829 in England, coming to America in 1848, settling in Thompson in 1850. He was employed for several years in a cotton mill. In 1872, he started and kept a hotel and livery stable in N. Grosvenordale. In 1852 he married Martha Hawthorn and had eight children.

If any of our readers could provide a photo of the hotel on Buckley Hill, it would be appreciated!

For our friends interested in cemetery research and restoration.

Albany, NY. Two months after headstone was sprayed with D/2 Biological Solution. No scrubbing or washing. Biodegradable, no bleach, no acid. Tested and used by National Park Service, the Veterans Administration and the Association for Gravestone Studies. D/2 Biological Solution's newest distributor is Granite City Tool Co. of VT.

Have questions? Please contact Ted Kinnari, President
D/2 Biological Solutions Westport, MA 02790
917-693-7441

THS Contact info: www.thompsonhistorical.org; email: jamartino@charter.net—860.923.3776