



The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter

www.thompsonhistorical.org

Fall 2003

Calendar of Events

Membership meetings or events for the Society.

Friday September 5, 2003 5—7 PM

- A Sneak Peek of the new Thompson Historical Society Museum at the Ellen Larned Building on Rt. 193 on the Common—for Society Members and invited guests. Come celebrate the opening of the new museum with us! Snacks and beverages served.

Saturday, September 6, 2003— 10 AM — 4 PM

- The new Museum is officially open for visitors. The first exhibit features the memorabilia of Dr. Paine and his family. Dr. Paine was one of the last of the Thompson's old time country doctors. Admission Free— Donations Accepted. Museum Shop open.

Wednesday, September 17, 2003 at 6:30 PM

- A Thompson Library presentation on the walls of New England by Robert Thorson, author of "Stone by Stone: The Magnificent History in New England's Stone Walls". Community Center—at the new Thompson Library, No. Gros.

Thursday, October 9, 2003 at 7 PM

- Robert & Marilyn Dustin will share their years of bird-watching experiences with us. Bird houses, bird feed and birding books will be available. Refreshments served. At the Old Town Hall.

Saturday, December 6, 2003 at 7:30 PM

- Christmas Concert—Host: Jane Vercelli
The 15th Annual THS Christmas Concert Old Town Hall, Thompson Hill Rehearsal will be on Sun., Nov. 30th at the Old Town Hall as follows:
3 p.m. Children (ages 4 through 8th grade - 9th graders+ sing with adults)
4 p.m. Women only
4:30 p.m. Women and men
5 p.m. Men only

Other membership meetings: April 1, 2004 and April 29, 2004—Topics to be announced.

The following dates are for Board of Directors meeting, to be held at the Larned Building at 7 PM unless otherwise stated:

Wednesday, September 3, 2003

Thursday, November 13, 2003

Thursday, January 15, 2004

Thursday, March 4, 2004

Monday, June 7, 2004— Picnic/

Annual Meeting for Directors/

Members (location—TBD)

All members are welcome to attend directors meetings.

Museum & Museum Shop

- Come see our museum **and** visit the museum shop nearby at the Old Town Hall. We will be open from 10 am—2 pm on the following dates:

- Saturday September 6, 2003

- Saturday October 4, 2003

- Saturday November 1, 2003

To contact the newsletter editor, send an email to jamartino@earthlink.net or call 860 923 3776

Membership Information

Membership dues are:

\$10.00 Individual Membership

\$15.00 Family Membership

\$25.00 Contributing Membership

\$5.00 Student Membership

Dues to be paid by July 1, 2003 for July 1, 2003—June 30, 2004 year

- 1st reminder: Summer newsletter

- 2nd reminder: Fall newsletter

THS—PO Box 47, Thompson CT 06277

Inside this issue:

Calendar of Events, 1
Membership News

Dr. Paine—our first exhibit; The Fire King 2

The President's Quill 2

Answer to Last Mystery question, News 3

Mystery Photo 4

Museum Preparations 4

Ladies Basketball, Jacob's Tavern 5

Quinebaug Mill 6

Q & A 6

Officers / Contact Info:

President: Joe Iamartino

Vice President: Sue Vincent

Treasurer: Barbara Weaver

Secretary: John Lengel

Curator: Mark Savolis

Collections: Hattie Greene

Photos: Alice Biesiadecki

Museum Shop: Lucille Barrette, Helen Flood, Val Iamartino, Henrietta Panu, June Schoppe, Sue Vincent, Sandra Warner, Beth Greene

Website: Barbara Loy

Museum Committee: Barbara Weaver; Beth Greene

Concert Chair: Jane Vercelli

Call us at 923-3200 or see

www.thompsonhistorical.org

The President's Quill by Joe Iamartino

With Dave Babbitt's retirement from the Society board, I find writing this first column as the Society's new president isn't as easy as I had hoped it would be. I could easily fill up 3 pages of this newsletter with stories on Dave alone, not to mention the efforts of the past presidents, board members and society volunteers who have labored in relative anonymity but who have been so giving to our organization. I won't write those pages now because there is something much more pressing that I have to tell you.

In September, our new museum opens. Later in this newsletter, I'll give credit to those wonderful volunteers who contributed to its creation. Right now, my message is this:

The Society spent more than 40% of its scarce financial resources to bring this museum to life.

Our most tangible contributions to Thompson history are the continued maintenance of the historic Larned Library, the home of the new museum, and the Old Town Hall on Thompson Common. We expect to help other historic buildings in town too. Folks, fixing these buildings is expensive. If there ever was a time when we needed your support, this is it. Volunteer your time, toss a few dollars in the basket and get involved. We need your help now in so many ways.

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FIRE KING.
RECENTLY FROM BOSTON.
Chemical and Philosophical Experimental Lecture.

THE Ladies and Gentlemen of Thompson and its vicinity are most respectfully informed that Dr. DIVINE, who has never been equalled in his Experiments, will gratify them with an EXPERIMENTAL LECTURE and show the power he possesses to withstand the influence of a very high degree of heat at Mr. STILES HOTEL, on MONDAY Evening, Sept. 29.

Mr D. will commence his Experiments by **eating burning sealing wax.** He will draw a Red Hot Iron over his tongue, face, hair, &c.

HE WILL EAT LIVE FIRE COALS. He will also dip his hands in Melted Lead, and take Lead from the ladle with his fingers and put it into his mouth.

He will also take the lead with a red hot spoon, and eat Flaming Balls, drink boiling Brandy, &c. He will also drink Florence Oil, heated to more than 500 degrees Farenheit.

After the above Experiments he will emit from his mouth a

BURRING PLANE,

with a variety of other Experiments to numerous to mention in an advertisement.

THIS Exhibition is strictly moral and scientific. Gentlemen of the Medical Faculty are respectfully requested to inspect each Experiment as it is performed. Tickets 25 cents. Children half price—to be had at the door and at this Office.

The Exhibition will commence at half past 7 o'clock.

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On Tuesday evening the 30th inst. Dr. Divine will give his Exhibition at Ashford, on Wednesday, 31st inst. at Dudley Town, and on Thursday Oct. 1st at Southbridge.

If you ever wondered what Thompson residents did for their evening entertainment, take a look at an advertisement in the September 26, 1834 Thompson Transcript for the "Fire King".

Sounds a lot like the recent rash of reality TV shows we've all been subjected to. Contributed by Charlie Seney. Thanks Charlie!

Dr. Paine & His Family — The Museum's First Exhibit

Beth Greene's creative spirit, hard work and determination to see the job through coupled with Barbara Weaver's outstanding administrative abilities have brought forth a museum worthy of Thompson's illustrious past.

The museum, after one solid year of renovations, will open officially September 6, 2003 from 10 am—4 pm. The first exhibit will feature items donated to the Society's collection from the family of Dr. Paine, one of Thompson's last country doctors. Paine family furniture, photos, and the tools of the Doctor's trade are on display. Interviews with people who knew the Doctor run on a video monitor and audio clips play excerpts from the family diaries. The exhibit alone is outstanding and in the setting of the old library, now given new color and vibrancy, the visitor feels as if one has stepped back one century to when the library was newly opened to the public.

A special thanks to Society members Ron Tillen, Marlys Elliott and Sue Vincent who assisted Beth Greene with display materials and literature. Lucille Barrette, Henrietta Panu and team have the refreshments responsibility for the Sneak Peek on Friday night and we thank them as well.

It is so satisfying to see the wonderful results of the many volunteers for this project. We're sure it will be appreciated by all who come to visit. Stop by!

**News:**

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor has included the Thompson Common in its 2003 pamphlet series "For the Common Good". The series describes historic or scenic town commons and greens in the National Heritage Corridor. Thanks to past Society presidents Jane Vercelli and Dave Babbitt for their work on the attractive page and a special thanks to the Village Improvement Society for their continuing efforts to maintain the old Thompson Common.

On Wednesday, August 27, 2003, State Archaeologist, Nick Bellantoni, will meet with the Thompson Open Space Study Committee (OSSC) at the Town Hall at 10 am. The OSSC was formed to conduct a Natural Resource Inventory and to prepare a Plan of Open Space Conservation for the town which will include Thompson's archaeological, historical and cultural resources. Society members are asked to attend.

The 15th Annual Christmas Concert will be held Sat., Dec. 6, 2003. Jane Vercelli wrote, "The Christmas Concert is a time when we gather to welcome the Christmas season by singing together, performing music for each other and sharing favorite readings. Everyone is welcome to sing with the chorus and/or do a reading or a musical performance on their own or as a duo, trio, etc. If you would like to perform as a solo, duo, trio, etc., please call 860-923-9661. If you would like to sing in the chorus, show up Sun., Nov. 30th at the appointed hour. If you can help with refreshments, please let me know that, too. Many thanks, Jane"

By the time you read this, the upcoming book draft on Thompson history should be in our hands for review. Donning Publishers insists they will be on time.

Answer to the Mystery Question from the Summer 2003

newsletter: How did Thompson village, Fabyan, get its name?

Marcella Houle Pasay, a Thompson native, author and a former research director of the Killingly Historical Center, tells us in her pamphlet on Fabyan how the village received its name.

"...in 1910, the Fabyan Woolen Mill of Stafford, CT, bought the New Boston Woolen Company, company houses, all the works and other buildings. Incorporated in 1904 by Herman and Simon Rawitser of New York City and Charles H. Meyers, Jr. of Stafford, the company was named for the father of the Rawitsers, Fabyan, of Bojanon, Germany. Their first mill was located in Stafford and the company retained Stafford as the main office."

So there we have it on good authority where the name came from. Marcella goes on to explain the time period when this occurred.

"It is unclear when the name of the village actually changed but the post office had closed for some time because there was confusion between New Boston and the Massachusetts town of the same name. In 1916 the post office reopened as Fabyan, CT, and in 1917 the school district was renamed Fabyan as well."

It is fairly obvious that significant name confusion existed. Not only was there Boston, MA and New Boston, CT but there were (or have been) no less than 9 Massachusetts villages known formally or informally by the New Boston name as well as one in New Hampshire. Those Massachusetts villages are:

New Boston / Dennis / Barnstable
 New Boston / Dracut / Middlesex
 New Boston / Fairhaven / Bristol
 New Boston / Fall River / Bristol
 New Boston / Framingham / Middlesex / now known as Nobscot
 New Boston / North Attleborough / Bristol
 New Boston / Rutland / Worcester
 New Boston / Sandisfield / Berkshire / P.O. & locality
 New Boston / Winchendon / Worcester

Thank you Marcella for helping to clear this issue up once and for all. Your pamphlets describing the Thompson villages were most helpful. Marcella is also the author of the Robert Thompson section of the upcoming book on Thompson history. Her research in this area has uncovered some fascinating information about Major Thompson and the early years of the Eastern Connecticut colony. We are all indebted to Marcella for the many hours of meticulous research and documentation she has given Eastern Connecticut.

Museum To Open in September! Final Preparations Underway

As Beth Greene, Barbara Weaver and the team creating the museum finish their work, another team has taken over to complete preparations. Led by Hattie Greene, the determined crew of Leslie Lavallee, Anna Naum, Mercedes Robbins, Jean Cole, Floyd Cole, Ada Temple, Gail Leveille, Gerry Beaupre and Ken Goloski has been painting, polishing silver, cleaning woodwork, dusting, sweeping, and making all kinds of repairs in and around

the century old building. Neighbor Jeff Blodgett is doing the lawnwork outside. Emile Breault is helping with the plumbing while Burt Rhodes repairs windows locks.

Hattie's clean-up effort is in part a family affair, and includes her husband Cliff Greene, her daughter Angela Kress and grand-daughters Heather and Alyssa. This will be one summer for their history books!! Our thanks to all.

Upcoming Events

October 9, 2003 at 7 PM—Old Town Hall

Robert & Marilyn Dustin, have been avid bird watchers for 55 years and in that time have seen more than 80 species. Observing from the home on Chase Road on Thompson Hill, the Dustins have a lifetime of birding experience to share with us. The new museum will be open that night as well, from 5:30 to 7 PM. Join us!!

Walking Weekend: Sat. Oct 11, 2003

Dave Babbitt will lead a nostalgic tour through No. Grosvenordale, talking about the mill and life in a mill village. Tour starts at 10 am at Bandstand on Rt. 12.



Mystery Photo: This photo was found in the former home of Sarah (Crosby) Dunleavy, an influential Thompson woman. Sarah's activities included direct participation in the Thompson Library and Day-Kimball Hospital. Does anyone know these finely dressed women and the circumstances behind the photo?

This photo, plus several photos of a young girl, possibly the 2nd or 3rd from the left top in the photo at left and a pen drawing of an ornate 'hippie' heart were found in the house. They made their way into Jim Sali's hands and he passed them on to the Society. The heart was drawn in 1969 by Amy ? and dedicated to Christopher ?



A fine North Grosvenordale ladies basketball team photo by George Pompeo. Front row seated from left: Mary (DeCarli) Morrison, Beatrice Patterson, Rose Patterson, Josephine Bednarz, Clara (Baron) Berthiume. Back Row, from left: Josephine (Sobosik) Seney, Alice Bednarz, Jeannette Martel, Mary Pratt, Helen Dryl



From page 6, this is believed to be the site of Jacob's Tavern, described in our Q & A section.

The site of the inn was on the north side of East Thompson Road across from the Speedway entrance but confirmation needed. Help please.....

AT AUCTION

Industrial Real Estate

(With Water Rights)

Machinery and Equipment

OF

WOOLEN MANUFACTURER

The Intervale Mills Plant

AT

Dudley, Mass., and Quinebaug, Conn.

On the Premises

Wednesday, May 24, 1939 at 10:00 A.M. D.S.T.

Real Estate: Includes a group of Brick and Frame Factory Buildings containing approximately 75,000 Square Feet of Floor Space.

Machinery and Equipment includes 8 Davis & Furber (Set of 3) Breaker and Finishing Cards 48" x 48". Davis & Furber Sample Card. 10 Johnson & Bassett 360 Spindle Spinning Mules, (1933-1928-1926), 2½" and 2¾" Gauge. Gerry 44" Mixing Picker. 5 Walker & Smith Rag Pickers 18". 3 Davis & Furber and Woonsocket Single and Double Acting Nappers, 66" to 80". 2 Parks & Woolson Single and Double Blade Cloth Shears, 60". 4 Davis & Furber Brass Plate Dressing Reels, 86" to 92". 14 Crompton & Knowles 82" Worsted Looms, 4 x 4 box, 25 Harness. 14 Warp Compressor and Davis & Furber 32" Spoolers. Parks & Woolson Cloth Winding and Measuring, and Doubling and Winding Machines. David Gessner Steam Cloth Press. 3 Tolhurst Extractors 40" and 48". 5 James Hunter, and Rodney Hunt Fulling Mills. 3 Rodney Hunt 6 and 8 string Washers. 4 James Hunter Dyeing Machines. Sargent Raw Stock Dryer 80" x 36".

Merrow, Arlington and Dinsmore Mill Sewing Machines, Davis & Furber Card Grinders, Yarn Reels, Scott Yarn and Cloth Testers, Laboratory Scales, etc.

Blowers, Scales, Fire Extinguishers, Shuttles, Bobbins, Jack Spools, Trucks, Pumps, Steel Tanks, Toledo Cloth Scale, First Aid Room, Saw Table, Drill, Shafting, Rockwood Drives, Loom Parts, Vises, etc., etc.

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This page is from a booklet presented to the Society by Kathryn Mangan Meyer from the archives of her mother Kathryn McNamara Mangan. Francis Fitzgibbons, from Quinebaug, wrote this about the auction. *For Quinebaugers, this was a sad day. It marked the end of an era of cordial relations between owners and workers. At the appointed time, men of the village moved to a respectable distance from the auctioneers stand...curiosity demanded that.*

Women of the village gathered further back under the big beech tree. They wept silently. An era was ended and never again would life be quite the same. The day was over, eventide passed into night with a strange silence. No longer did the watchman ring the nine o'clock bell. From the barn, there was no kicking of the stall and no whinney from Old Jim, the faithful mill horse. Troubled villagers tossed in their beds.

This tragedy in our village became more so in the next two years. War was on our doorsteps and the Intervale Mills could have done so much to help Uncle Sam.

Francis Fitzgibbons 2003 Quinebaug, CT

Ask The Society

- Q.** When did the Quinebaug Mill close?
- A.** 1939. The Quinebaug Mill in its heyday was the Eben Stevens Company, later known as Intervale Mills. Eben Stevens was the son of the founder of Stevens Linen, then America's leading linen producer but the two companies were not linked. During the Depression, like many northern textile firms, the mill closed, and its assets auctioned. See page from auction booklet at left.
- Q** From reader Mike Stevens: Can you tell me if (the described) inn still exists. I had heard that it was still standing. "Their home [Nathanial & Mercy Jacob] in Thompson, Connecticut became a stopping place for travelers, and became known as the "Half-Way House" between Boston and Hartford. During the Revolutionary War, the 'Old Jacobs Tavern' entertained many well-known leaders and officers. Young Nathan Hale on his journey to Boston in 1776 break fasted there. General George Washington breakfasted there while returning from Boston on his first Presidential Tour on November 7, 1789.....Info from 'Jacobs Journal' a family genealogy newsletter put out by Dale Jacobs of Springfield, Virginia
- A.** See the map on page 5. It is probably the old home across from the Speedway. Need material on this from our readers.