WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2019

Historical Society and American Legion Hold Annual Memorial Day Ceremony
Visitors Walk Maple Street Cemetery to Learn About Local Veterans

By Cheryl Casey

On one of the first warm and sunny mornings of the spring season, local residents, visiting family and friends, and members of both the Waterbury Historical Society and American Legion Post 59 gathered at Maple Street Cemetery, in Waterbury Center, to honor those military personnel who lost their lives in the course of service to the United States Armed Forces.

The event began with a traditional Memorial Day Service led by members of the American Legion. Boy Scout Nate Sherman read a poem for the laying of the wreath, and local resident Ann Harvey belted out a lovely rendition of “America the Beautiful”.

After the ceremony, attendees split into four groups and rotated to the sites of four prominent veterans in Waterbury’s history: Fire Chief and champion poultry farmer, C.C. Fisher (presented by current Fire Chief Gary Dillon); farmer and author, Herbert G. Hunt, Jr. (presented by daughter Nancy Knorr); Village President and B&B owner, Rex Walter Morse (presented by local historian Brian Lindner); and dairy farmer, George E. Woodard (presented by his son, George Woodard, Jr.). (See Featured Figures, p. 7 for summaries of these men’s stories).

The event is planned each year by Historical Society member Jan Gendreau, with assistance and support from Museum Curator Jack Carter.

Annual Voting Takes Place at April Program

By Cheryl Casey

At this year’s annual business meeting, which precedes the April program, members were asked to vote on the slate of officers, committee members, the 2019 budget, and an amendment to the bylaws.

All officers and committee members were unanimously approved. The only change to the Society’s leadership this year was the election of Grace Sweet to complete the final year of the three-year Secretary term, recently vacated by Cheryl Casey.

Members also voted to include the Outreach Education Committee as a formal working committee of the Society.

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Memorial Day Ceremony and Cemetery Walk: (top right) Nate Sherman reads a poem during the ceremony; (top center) attendees gather around the headstone of C.C. Fisher; (top left) Ann Harvey sings “America the Beautiful;” (center) family photographs on the headstone of George E. Woodard; and (bottom) a panoramic view of the four walking groups as they gather at each grave site.

Special Event!
The Waterbury Historical Society welcomes back the Yankee Brass Band

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019, AT 7PM
THATCHER BROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL, STOWE STREET, WATERBURY

For 33 years, the Yankee Brass Band has championed the cause of “historically-informed performances” to audiences throughout New England. Using rare and authentic period instruments and outfitted in appropriate uniforms, the Yankee Brass Band presents the music of the mid-to-late 19th century.

This event is free and open to the public. Donations are appreciated.
New Members

Jim & Lorrie Casey  
Bridgewater, NJ

Alyssa Johnson  
Waterbury, VT

Corrections

From the Editor:

In the last issue of the newsletter (Spring, vol. 20, no. 1), the Letter to the Editor from Calvin Dow contained a copy error. The letter mistakenly references “hot mulled cider” and should read “hot hulled cider,” with regards to Mr. Dow’s question about the local peddler selling such in the 1920s.

Any information about this peddler would be greatly appreciated and can be sent to the Editor at cheryl.casey1010@gmail.com

NQID 2019

The Waterbury Historical Society joined the “Greatest Show on Earth” during the annual NQID Parade on Main Street in Waterbury.  

(Photograph: Paul Willard)

NEXT MEETING AND PROGRAM:

Summer Picnic Potluck

July 31, 2019, 6pm

Hope Davey Park Shelter

Featuring

Lamoille River Swingers

Please join us with your favorite dish for our annual potluck, followed by a presentation from the Lamoille River Swingers on the history of square dancing. There will be a demonstration of square dancing and an opportunity to join in the call-and-response dancing fun!

The picnic begins at 6pm, and the presentation at 7pm. This event is free and open to the public. Beverages and dessert of brownies and ice cream provided.
In attendance: 67

Call to order, 7:00pm

I. Barb Farr welcomed people to the annual meeting and summarized key points from the last year:
   A. We will retain our part-time archivist and part-time cataloguer for our collections. All of our information is being put online in PastPerfect, so that people can search the database of our collection. There is information on families and objects that have been donated. Waterbury Rotary has also been entering their data.
   B. The Waterbury Vacation Hints book is available for sale, as are railroad rails from the Mount Mansfield Electric Railroad and notecards with the new rail art. The cards have different images of the rail art at different times of the day. Thank you to Jan Gendreau for spearheading the rails and notecards projects.
   C. WHS had another successful annual appeal drive, raising $6300.00.
   D. We have held four programs this past year and all have been very successful. Thanks to the program committee. Our next event is the annual Ghost Walk, and will be held at Maple Street Cemetery on Memorial Day.

II. Paul Willard presented the financial statement and proposed budget for 2019.
   A. The anticipated income is $17,595.00 and anticipated expenses are $21,628.77.
   B. The deficit budget is because we wanted to get our collection online in PastPerfect, and this priority initiative is pricey—between the software and Tracey as a part-time archivist. Last year she was 10 hours per week, funded by a donation from Karen Steele. This year she will be funded by WHS for 5 hours per week.
   C. Question from Herschel Murray: Money for the chimney restoration as both income and expense?
   D. Anne Imhoff clarified that the money had to come through the WHS because we are a nonprofit, but the State is actually managing the project and the contractor being hired to do the renovations. They own the property and the chimneys.
   E. Motion to approve the 2019 budget; seconded.
   F. Motion approved unanimously.

III. Amendment to the bylaws presented by Barb Farr.
   A. Outreach Education Committee has existed for some time, but has never been recognized by the bylaws. The amendment is a description of the committee’s charge.
   B. Motion to approve the new bylaws section describing the Outreach Education Committee; seconded.
   C. Motional approved unanimously.

IV. Curator’s report presented by Jack Carter
   A. Train station refresh was another big project this past year, and it received an award.
   B. The murals from Arvads are split between the Steele Community Room and the Community Room at the train station. We are fortunate to be able to preserve that mural.
   C. The 1851 map has been framed in a shadow box in the Town Clerk’s office.
   D. The museum is open every day for self-guided tours, M-F, 8-4. The Saturday open houses will occur again this summer and fall, with dates to come.
   E. Working with Jan Gendreau on the Ghost Walk, Memorial Day at 11 a.m., in Maple Street Cemetery, highlighting George Woodard Sr., Col. Rex Morris, Herbert Hunt, and C.C. Fisher.

V. Nominating Committee report, presented by Jack Carter.
   A. Thanked Jan Gendreau and Jane Willard as the other members of the committee.
   B. The following candidates have been nominated for this year’s open positions: Jan Gendreau for Board of Directors, Barbara Farr for President, Grace Sweet for Secretary, and Paul Willard for Treasurer. The ballot also calls for approval of committee members. Please note that committees always welcome new members, if anyone is interested.
   C. No nominations from the floor.
   D. Motion to accept the slate of officers and committee members; seconded.
   E. Slate approved unanimously.

VI. Outreach Education Committee report, presented by Jane Willard.
   A. One initiative is to connect with area schools. The committee has participated in several projects organized by Thatcher Brook, including producing a coloring book about historic buildings; the proceeds will go to the Food Shelf and to the Historical Society.

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Meeting Minutes

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B. Classes from all schools are always invited to our History Center.

C. Oral histories are being collected, although none in this past year.

D. The VHS trivia event was fun but a challenge; in the future, we would like to make our own Waterbury trivia.

E. The latest project is a historical record of Waterbury life since 2000. The goal is to have the project completed by 2025, which may result in a book. There is a survey available on paper this evening, but also available online via the website, FPF, and Facebook. May 5th is the survey deadline.

F. Laura Parette explained that the committee is using the information to discern what form this historical record should take (hard copy, online, and so forth).

G. Jane asked for people to see her or Laura Parette interested in writing some articles.

VII. Barb gave a special thanks to the Program Committee for always putting on terrific programs and introduced Betty Jones for the Program Committee report.

A. Betty thanked the committee for all of their work this past year.

B. Summary of programs: WDEV, spiritualism, and the Perry Hill Caboose. We are averaging about 40-50 attendees per program. Coming up in summer is the history of square dancing at our annual picnic. October 23 is a program about cemeteries in the area. The committee is also working on a special program with the 40th Army Band.

C. Betty invited people to submit suggestions for programs they would like to see.

VII. Brian Lindner was introduced for the evening’s program on Waterbury-area train wrecks.

A. At the end of the program, several attendees asked questions.

Program concluded and meeting adjourned, 8:17 pm

Waterbury-Area Train Wrecks

Top Left: A locomotive plowed into the Duxbury soil on January 26, 1906, after being deliberately separated from its cars. Bolton Station agent Patrick F. McCabe was arrested for the sabotage. No serious injuries were reported.

Bottom Left: One of the worst passenger train wrecks in the Waterbury area took place on March 11, 1924, in Bolton. There were three fatalities and 60 people injured.

Bottom Right: On April 23, 1940, a 100-car train derailed and piled up just north of Waterbury’s train station. One car detached and plowed into the Eldridge Bobbin Mill. Miraculously, no one was seriously injured. Curious onlookers wandered the highly dangerous scene.

(All photos courtesy of WHS.)
An Anatomy of Waterbury Center

Submitted by Calvin Dow

Back in the olden days of Vermont—around 1850 to 1950—certain days on the “Olde Farmer’s Almanac” calendar were sacred to Vermont native men. Vermont women had no sacred days, as they were fighting men who refused them the right to vote. It took them one hundred years to get that sacred day in 1920.

The men would not work on April 1st, annual Town Meeting Day. May 1st was the opening day of fishing season. Every Sunday all summer the Waterbury Center baseball team would play a game with teams from Stowe, Duxbury, Moretown, Waitsfield, and Richmond. November 15 was opening day of deer season. Every man owned a deer rifle, a shotgun, a fishing rod, and a baseball glove. My mother owned a piano and violin that she inherited from her mother. That was rare in Waterbury Center in the old days.

After the last Ice Age, 12,000 years ago, two fresh water springs on North Hill provided drinking water for Waterbury Center residents. They became brooks that flowed down through Waterbury Center and emptied into the Winooski River in Waterbury. These brooks were named Big Brook and Little Brook. The Creator stocked them with beautiful red speckled trout. Early Native Americans had a diet of venison, turkey, pheasant, partridge, and trout. My father said, “Why should I travel? I have everything in Waterbury Center!”

My grandfather emigrated from Orange, Vermont, to Waterbury Center in 1900. The DNA lab in Utah traces Dow back to a cave in the Hebrides Islands in Scotland, where Caveman Dow drew a picture on the wall of his domesticated mastodon, who said, “It’s primitive.” Caveman Dow replied, “Compared to what?”

Top: A view of Maple Street in Waterbury Center, 1931.
Middle: A similar view of Maple Street from 1925. Note the changes in the utility poles during the six-year interim.
Bottom: The author’s father, uncles, and friends at the Dow’s deer camp on North (now Barnes) Hill Road.
All photos courtesy of Calvin Dow.

To submit a letter to the editor, stories, or photos for an upcoming issue, email the editor at cheryl.casey1010@gmail.com or send by post to: Dr. Cheryl Casey, 1389 Kneeland Flats Rd., Waterbury Center, VT 05677.

Quarterly submission deadlines: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15
Featured Figures: C.C. Fisher, Herbert Hunt Jr., Rex Morse, and George Woodard Jr.

The Veterans of the Memorial Day Cemetery Walk

Selected text reprinted from the 2019 Memorial Day Cemetery Walk program, by Jan Gendreau

Cornelius C. Fisher (1900-1985). Born in Brookfield, Vermont, Cornelius moved with his family to Waterbury when he was a child. At 16, he joined the Waterbury Village Fire Department. He served on the Fire Department for 55 years, 27 of which were as the Fire Chief. Cornelius was highly involved in the community, not just through the Fire Department. His community membership included the United Methodist Church, the Winooski Lodge 49 Free and Accepted Masons, the Waterbury Lions Club, and the National Leghorn Association. He raised championship poultry!

Herbert G. Hunt, Jr. (1923-2013). Herbert Hunt, Jr., born and raised in Lynn, MA, was a teenager when he came to VT to work with the CCC. In 1940, he joined the Army as a 17-year-old, and was stationed at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on December 7, 1941. He fought in the Pacific Theater during the remainder of WWII. After returning home, he graduated from Vermont Agricultural College. In 1954, he accepted the position of Supervisor of the State Hospital Farm, moving his family to Waterbury. He later coauthored Empty Beds: A History of the Vermont State Hospital (M. Kincheloe, 1989).

Rex Walter Morse (1905-1956). Rex was born in Stowe and moved to Waterbury with his family when he was twelve. He was a graduate of the class of 1923 and earned a degree in engineering from UVM. To help pay for college, Rex enrolled in ROTC. This began a long and varied military career. He was remembered as a natural leader of men in uniform. After WWII, Rex returned to Waterbury, purchased a taxi business, was manager of the First Nat’l. Grocery, and served as Village President for several years, as well as member of various civic, fraternal, and veteran organizations.

George E. Woodard (1920-2008). George was born on the Loomis Hill farm that parents Walter and Eva Woodard bought in 1912. He attended the Loomis Hill School through the eighth grade and then went to work for his father. George was good at running horse-drawn hay equipment, often raking hay for the neighbors. In the late 1930s, his father bought the milk truck route and George was the driver, picking up cans of milk from nearby farms. These truck-driving abilities were useful in the Second World War. George married Teresa Collins before leaving for the war, and they bought the Loomis Hill farm after he returned.
Donations Welcome - We are a community organization that deeply appreciates the support and interest of our community. You can donate online at our website below.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

$10 per person
$15 per family (couple and children under 18)

*(Check the mailing label on your newsletter to see when your membership expires.)*

Please help the Historical Society GO GREEN!

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