



## ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Essex Town-Est. 1763 Essex Jct.-Est. 1892 Essex Comm.Historical Society-Est. 1991

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### THE ECHO

The Newsletter of the  
Essex Community Historical Society  
Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont  
Published twice a year, spring and fall.

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### 20th ANNIVERSARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"The purpose of the Essex Community Historical Society shall be to bring together those people who are interested in history, and especially in the history of the Town of Essex, including the village of Essex Junction. Understanding the history of our community is basic to our democratic way of life, gives us a better appreciation of our American heritage."

On October 1, 2011 we celebrated our 20th year as the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum and the Essex Community Historical Society. We have grown so much in our 20 years and added so much to collection. We could not have done any of this without the support from our membership, the Town of Essex, volunteers, Board of Directors, the Essex community and the public wanting to preserve our history and artifacts. We are proud of our community and will continue to work hard to record and reflect our past.

The driving force "for the formation of the Essex Community Historical Society and the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum came from the State of Vermont's Bicentennial celebration. In August of 1989, the Essex Community Bicentennial Committee put forth as its primary goal the formation of a permanent historical museum to serve the residents of the Town of Essex, the Village of Essex Junction and all of Chittenden County. The late Harriet Farnsworth Powell, a lifelong resident of Essex, whose dream was to establish a facility to preserve Essex's past and celebrate its future, was instrumental in persuading the Essex School board to turn over the White School built in 1875 to the Town as a museum. On October 1, 1991 the 1st annual meeting of the Essex Community Historical Society was held. 51 members ratified the by-laws and elected 4 officers and 7 directors of the society. In a short period of time, the 141st historical society in the State of Vermont and the only one chartered in Vermont's bicentennial year was created."

I believe that in a short period of time the Essex Community Historical Society has volunteered an extraordinary number of hours to provide a facility that preserves the history of the community and aroused the interest of the entire community.

Please join me in welcoming our newest board member, Jan Kilmer. We are glad to have her aboard.

*Eva C. Clough, President*

(Quotes are from the files of George R. W. Clapp.)



## RIDING AROUND THE CENTER

By John Duby and Laurie Jordan

### A FARM MARKET GARDEN

John Duby was five and heading for home after going “down to the store to pick up some hamburg for dinner. And I guess like any kids that young, I panicked about crossing the road. And went at the wrong time and got hit by a car. It turned out to be a nurse who was heading for work....As a result of that, the nurse gave me a pair of rabbits, which started my rabbit business which was part of a market garden operation that we had on the farm. *And I raised rabbits for pets and for meat...until...I was eighteen!*”

John's uncle's store was located at what used to be the preventorium on 104 Center Road. His parents first lived in that school house which was attached to a one car garage that connected to the main building where his grandparents lived. The building used to be for TB patients and it had screened-in porches for fresh air, which was good to prevent tuberculosis. John's grandfather, Guy Ransom, had a market garden in back with one cow, chickens, and vegetables. John's mother, Doris Duby, “caught the idea from that” when she and Alvin soon moved to 95 Center Road across from what was then Ezra Gates' farm (later owned by Ray Nichols and now Price Chopper).

John explained that his mother used to start in the spring. “She'd have these *cold frames* where she would plant seeds....The cold frames were a box made out of lumber set on the ground and covered with an old storm window. The storm window would let the sun in through the glass, but it would also keep the heat in the box..” Then she could “start tomatoes and peppers and all kinds of plants that people used to buy because they were already started.....Once it got past the frost season, then we'd want to plant. Also we had a green house where she'd start plants in those too. So she started out selling plants. I don't know if they called them bedding plants or what....And then she'd plant her own garden and we had vegetables—all kinds of





vegetables—to sell all during the summer. Whatever came in season.

“Our house was supposedly *one of the oldest houses in town.*” In the basement, “we heard rumors that it might have been a cut nail factory. But it had a dirt floor with planks over the dirt. It had a plastered ceiling with the remains of a beehive oven. And there was also a fireplace in the basement and...up on the first floor. But they were eventually replaced because they were unsafe. And the house had horse-hair plaster. They used horse hair to bind plaster together in the old days. We got our water from a well. It was sort of a community. The [Nichol’s] house across the road from us also took their water from it.” Wescott’s Twin Maples used to be at 85 Center Road, which was next to them. And John’s cousin, Shirley Wool, lived just down the road by the tracks. Her brick house remains on Center Road across from the bike path where the Burlington Lamoille RR crossed.

John reminisced., “The earliest memory I have, when I was probably two or three years old, was of the railroad. It used to run through town. I’d hear the train blow the whistle down at the Route 15 crossing by Wool’s house. And then I would put my foot on the baseboard of the wall of the house and grab a hold of the sill; pull myself up. I could barely look out the window and see the train....*And the most exciting part was whenever I saw a red snowplow on the front of a train going through!...It pulled up over at the creamery.*”

#### THE CREAMERY

“I remember going in there, into the creamery [in back of the railroad station on 16 Towers Road]. And *it was fascinating*

because—well, I guess the way they cooled. As soon as they dumped the milk, they would run it through a cooler which was like a waterfall. It would come out the top of this cold water tube, or ice water tubes. And the milk would come down out of that like a waterfall. And it would cool the milk so that it didn’t sour.

“They had an ice house there too. They cut ice on the river in Essex Junction I guess. And then trucked the ice up there and covered it with sawdust so that it kind of insulated it. So the farmers would be getting chunks of ice for their milk cooler tanks when they use their water tank with ice in it to keep their milk cool so it wouldn’t sour before it was picked up.”

Farmers “didn’t bring their own milk up there,” John explained. “My father had a truck route where we would pick up the milk from the farms. And I’d go with him. And well, we would take a set of milk cans to replace the ones that we were picking up. And then, you know once we had the truck full of cans of milk, we’d go to the creamery. Unload them and they would dump the milk and then clean the milk cans. And we’d have them ready for the next time. Next trip!”

#### ANIMAL TRAVEL

John’s farm had three cows of its own. “We always had a litter of pigs coming up....That was one good thing about the creamery over here,” continued John. “They always had boiling hot water because they steamed the farmers’ cans that came with the milk....



*Yes! The pigs didn't like that at all!* And in some cases we would about once a year butcher a pig. And we would go to the creamery and get a fifty gallon barrel full of steaming water to dip the pig in after it was dead. And then that would facilitate the removing of the pig bristles or the pig hair before you cut up the pig....We sold them mostly as piglets. Then people raised their own pig and butchered it....Male pigs, if they are not castrated, do not taste good. So, my job was to hold the male pigs while my father castrated them.

"We also had a horse on the farm, which was a work horse. We had a buggy that we hitched him to if we wanted to go for a ride. But he was also a work horse and a plow or dragging a dump rake or something like that. Then later on we got a doodle bug, which was a stripped down chassis of an old truck. Only we could hook equipment to that. It was a lot stronger than a horse. And then after that [our] first tractor was an International Harvester. Cub which was the smallest model....[We got that] in the middle 1940s, when I was in my early teens....That was a welcome when we needed something like that....In fact we cut the field right where [108 Center Road] is now and another over in there that we cut the hay and used it to feed our cows and the horse."

"We also raised turkeys and ducks...There is a [winter] picture of the farm and it shows these range shelters... And these were shelters for the chickens in good weather. Because of the so-called range fed,...that's where they lived during the summer. (see photo page 2.)

So any hens stopped laying eggs, then they were ready for meat. My mother

would kill them...[and sell them] to anybody who called and ordered one....And she furnished all the chickens for chicken pie supper for a graduation trip fund raiser."

John's grandfather "had *all kinds of chickens and all kinds of vegetables*. [He] had an egg route in Burlington, and I used to go with him to deliver the eggs once a week. We'd deliver eggs and fresh vegetables....We got there in this old panel truck. But their egg route similar to what they have now a days. Egg cartons. So we had a regular route that took us about all day Saturday to deliver the eggs. And then we ended up going to Kresgees [Church St.] to the soda fountain and get a banana split at the end of the day."

*Look for many more exciting stories about John's travels around town and his Essex school days in our spring ECHO issue. He still enjoys taking in our town history. John was present at the 20th annual meeting: that's him in the front row, fifth from right!*





## DONATIONS

**Mary Gauthier:** a write-up and picture of her relatives outside their home at Butler's Corners in the late 1800s.

**Betsy Melvin:** boxed collection of Essex photos c. 1959 to 1965.

**Gwen Morey:** photos of the featherhead dolls that she refurbished.

**Geoff Billiu and family:** bedspread crocheted from flax by his great-grandmother. The flax came from a Weed Road farm. Also included was documentation of his family genealogy (Blood, Castle, Ayers, and Keelers) including death and marriage certificates.

**Tom Martin:** trolley bells, trolley hand rail and scale, and two drury brick molds.

**S. B. Signs:** "Lest We Forget" Memorial Day parade banner.

**Tim Jerman:** *Burlington to Cambridge RR* DVD.

**Church of Latter Day Saints:** about 20 from the church's youth group donated their time to help sort the ECHS museum's town and village annual and school reports. They put them in chronological order.

**THANK YOU!!!**

## SHARE YOUR HISTORY!

With the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, there will be numerous events throughout the state to commemorate the anniversary of the war. The Essex Community Historical Society is engaged in researching the people from the area that were somehow involved in this war.

Tim Jerman is looking for old mill foundations at Hubbel Falls.

More information on Hannah Clark is being looked into. Hannah was married to Tim Bliss of Essex, and he was one of the first signers of statehood in 1791!

Penny Pillsbury is conducting research and interviews about the people of Essex. She is hoping to compile this information into ongoing programs of various themes. A title she suggested was "Notable and Nuts." Eva mentioned the Civil War soldier, Norman Woodworth. His diaries tell of life in the 1830s—1860s.



## 150 YEARS AGO—THE CIVIL WAR HITS HOME IN ESSEX

By Tim Jerman

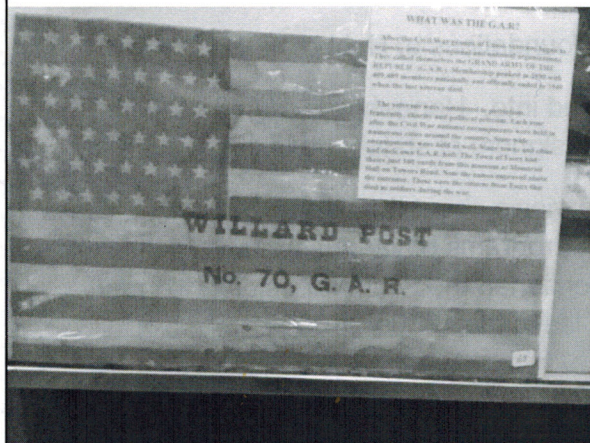
At Town meeting, on March 6, 1866, the three-person Essex select board voted to print enough copies of the Civil War "Memorial Record" to give one to each family in the Town, no less than 600 copies.

The extraordinary detailed record of every Essex soldier paints a picture of hardship and sacrifice, but not shared equally by all soldiers and residents, and not without political controversy. Dr. Lucius Butler, the author, was a practicing physician, and was clear to point out that his recollections were a combination of oral communications and official records.

Some of the soldiers' stories are heartbreaking. Like most towns, many more Essex soldiers died from disease than combat, and almost all of those killed, seven total, died at or near the Wilderness campaign in Virginia in 1864. Butler describes the experience of George H. Brown, who survived to tell his tale:

*He was wounded in the Battle of the Wilderness, May 5, 1864 at about 4:00 p.m. that day. He lay on the ground between the lines of battle all night, and until the next day. Up to twelve o'clock P.M., he received an occasional drink of water from soldiers who were searching among the dead and wounded for their comrades, but aside from that nothing til he was carried off to the Field Hospital. After he was wounded the Union lines were broken, and he lay midway between. On the morning of the 2nd day the Union line of battle was extended over him, but scarcely had he been carried off the field, ere the Union forces were again driven back, and the rebels occupied the ground on which he lay wounded. He was wounded in the thigh, producing a compound fracture of the femur. After he fell he received five wounds; a bad one in the hip, from which the ball was extracted on the 16th of May, and was found to be flattened and one portion of it turned at right angles with the other. Another wound was in his back, two on his leg and ankle, and one on his head. At the Field Hospital only one of his wounds was dressed. \**

The narrative goes on to describe how Corporal Brown eventually was attended to, only after it was clear he would survive, and was discharged a year to the day later, May 5, 1865.



*The Grand Army of the Republic flag. After the Civil War groups of Civil war veterans began to organize into local and national organizations. They called themselves THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC. Membership peaked in 1890 at 409,489 members nationally and officially ended in 1949 when the last veteran died. The Town of Essex had their organization just 100 yards from the museum at the Memorial Hall.*



Butler described several personal stories, and spent three pages of narrative describing the horrors of Andersonville prison in Georgia, where Joshua L. Day died after capture at the Wilderness.... "Andersonville, a name which will go down to posterity as the personification of cruelty and inhumanity, unparalleled in all the annals of history." This prediction proved accurate.

But as interesting as the records of who fought and where, are the descriptions of the pressure of Town taxpayers of meeting call after call from President Lincoln for more soldiers to fight for the Union. When the war broke out, four men from Essex immediately joined the First Vermont Regiment in Burlington, the Howard Guards. Edgar A. Beach has the distinction of being the first Essex resident to join, and he was rewarded with a gift of \$100 from Byron Stevens, who was the patriotic son of Revolutionary War veteran and early Essex settler, Abram Stevens. This was the harbinger of "bounties" paid to recruits, which would later become necessary to attract volunteers. In 1861, however, there was no shortage of eager volunteers to fill the ranks.

But that changes. The rebellion did not stop, and the idea that towns should add to government incentive payments to enlist began to receive serious discussion. So in August, 1862, Essex voted to give a \$100 bounty to anyone who would fill the quota assigned to the Town. Other towns were taking similar actions, and Essex was not to be outdone in its patriotic duty. Unfortunately, this action was deemed illegal, as it was determined that towns had no authority to raise monies for any other than town purposes. The legislature changed this at a special session in October 1862, and in January 1863 Essex voted again to impose a tax.

In December 1863, the issue of bounties heated up in Essex at a town meeting. According to Butler, "it was the occasion of an

exciting, animated canvass, in which strong opposition to the payment of bounties by the Town, was developed in both political parties of the day." The town voted 71-40 to pay every volunteer \$350 to enlist. The select board had to borrow money to meet the challenge, but it was met. All quotas were filled, and the draft, postponed from time to time, was averted. But the need for more troops continued.

General U. S. Grant took control of all Union armies in March 1864, and three more calls for troops rapidly followed. More bounties were proposed, but in November 1864, it seemed town taxpayers had had enough. They voted not to allow a new tax to be raised to indemnify the select board for money already expended. Then, at a subsequent meeting two weeks later, a larger sum was passed. Butler explained that opposition came "not from a desire to repudiate any just obligation, but from a feeling that the people were burdened almost beyond endurance, with taxation." (sound familiar?)

By the end of 1864, it was clear the war effort had turned and the end was in sight. At a meeting February 7, 1865, the last tax was levied to pay bounties, but the new quota was reduced to only four recruits due to prior successful enlistments. Butler singles out the 1865 select board for "*untiring, persistent, and patriotic efforts*." They were George Gates, J. K. Drury (brickyard founder) and E. J. Buttolph.

With peace at hand in April of 1865, the Town of Essex could assess the total cost. 140 men enlisted from the town. 26 died from disease, 7 killed in action, 9 were taken prisoner, 8 deserted, and 13 were wounded. Total bounties equaled \$37,500, more than \$100 to each voter, a very large sum for that time (it would be \$1,333 per voter in 2010 dollars).



Butler had harsh words for the few deserters who took bounty money and disappeared, but he does not judge the others, except for this curious observation:

*The young men of the town have borne the burden and heat—the suffering and hardship of the four long years of bloody war. To them belongs the glory and the honor; whilst the middle-aged—those liable to enrollment and draft, have quietly sat down around the family hearth-stone, to hoard up and enjoy the rich accumulations which the war has thrown into their laps.*

The author was born in 1820 and was 39 when the war broke out...was he perhaps including himself in this veiled criticism of those his age who paid to avoid service? If so, it would have been part of the many vigorous debates in Essex during the long and taxing effort of the American Civil War.

(\*All quotes and references in this article come from L.C. Butler's *The Memorial Record of Essex, Vermont*, published by RS Stiles, Book and job printer, of Burlington, 1866.)

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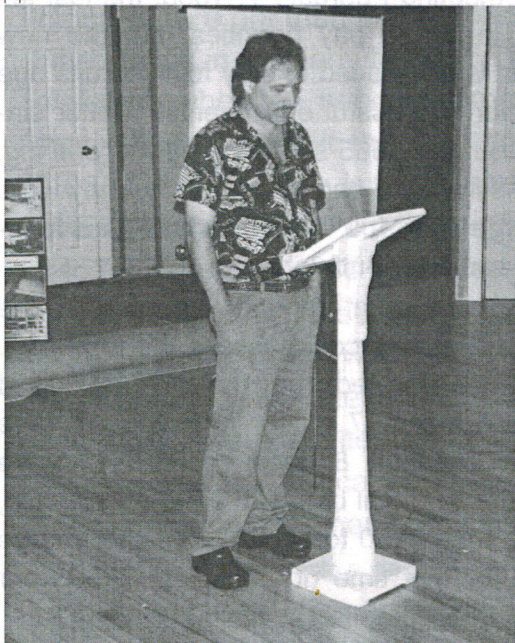
### **ECHS Happenings**

Laurie gave a talk to Mrs. Filipeck's Summit St class on May 11, and a tour to Mrs. Badore's class on May 5th. Laurie also continues to conduct the walking tours.

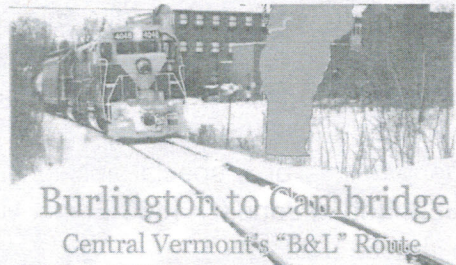
At the Memorial Day parade, two banners were carried by Sherry, Ann, Kathy, and Lori Lambert.

The museum opened on June 5th with about 30 people visiting!

In September, Tim and Ann were interviewed by Channel 17, in which they discussed the museum and activities.



The Annual meeting was held at the Memorial Hall on October 4th. Guest speaker was Jim Jones and he talked about his DVD about the Vermont railroads. ECHS also celebrated their 20th anniversary! Anyone interested in purchasing Jim's DVD, please contact ECHS. DVDs are \$25 plus shipping.



Speaker, Jim Jones, at the annual meeting.



## ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERS

Eva Clough, Co-President (14)  
42 Bringham Hill Road  
879-0849

Tim Jerman, Co-President (12)  
5 Sycamore Lane  
878-2972

Barb Chapin (14)  
429 Chapin Road  
922-1230

Sherry Norton, Vice Pres (13)  
9 Maplelawn Drive  
879-7334

Ann Gray, Treasurer (14)  
28 Rosewood Lane  
878-4088

Jan Kilmer (14)  
15 Cabot Road  
878-2026

Laurie Jordan, Secretary (13)  
259 River Road  
879-6467

Polly McEwing (12)  
5 Doubleday Lane  
879-6862

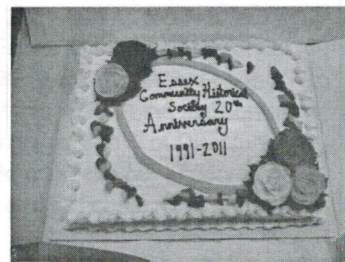
Katherine Reynolds (14)  
88 Park Street  
878-2193

Kathy Dodge (13)  
P.O. Box 8264  
Essex, VT 05451  
878-4272

John Duby (14)  
62 Learned Drive  
Westford, VT 05494  
879-1841

William Parkinson (12)  
P.O. Box 40  
Hinesburg, VT 05461  
482-3113

*All addresses are Essex Junction, VT 05452, except where noted.  
(denotes year of term expiration)*



## ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please print

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Circle relevant Annual Membership Category or Lifetime:

Individual \$10

Family \$15

Senior (65 and older) \$5

Lifetime (individual, married, civil union) \$100

\_\_\_\_ Yes! I would like to volunteer at the museum or other event.

Make checks payable to: Essex Community Historical Society, P.O. Box 8388,  
Essex, Vermont 05451





Essex, VT 05451

P.O. Box 8388

## Calendar of Events

**Friday, December 2, 2011**

**at 6:30 P.M.**

**Tree lighting and sing-a-long**

**Meet at EES, and walk to the town  
common.**

**Once again the Girl Scouts will be  
providing cookies!**

