

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.

Spring 2013

Edited by Mildred "Molly" Brown
Essex Community Historical Society
P. O. Box 8388
Essex, VT 05451

E-mail address:
essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net

A YEAR FOR CELEBRATING

2013 seems like a year for anniversaries. It's not only the Town of Essex's 250th Anniversary of the granting of the town charter on June 7, 1763, but it's also the 150th for the Civil War Battle of Gettysburg.

Several members of the ECHS Board have enjoyed participating in the planning of the 250th charter celebration with other community members. The kickoff event was a fun evening at Town Meeting in March where a group of "actors" re-enacted the first Essex meeting in 1786. Although a lot of laugh lines made it into the play, a serious effort was made to bring attention to the real town fathers (and mothers!) who pioneered and built the early town into a thriving farm community. More activities are in the works, including a county-wide celebration to be held at the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington on Sunday, June 9, 2013.

We would like to thank John Duby and Rob Grandchamp for their service on the Board as they move on to other activities. John's memories of yesteryear in Essex have made for wonderful nostalgia, and Rob's Civil War presentation was a highlight of last year's annual meeting. We hope to have some new additions to the board to report very soon.

We're looking forward to warm weather and re-opening of the Harriet Powell Museum in June. We'll have some new artifacts on display so put a trip to the museum on your Sunday schedule!

Tim Jerman, Co-President

Eva Clough, Co-President

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2012-2013

Eva Clough, Co-President (14)
42 Brigham Hill Road
879-0849
clough42@myfairpoint.net

Tim Jerman, Co-President (15)
5 Sycamore Lane
878-2972
Vrunner56@msn.com

Barb Chapin (14)
129 Chapin Road
922-1230
ebomalcolm@hotmail.com

Sherry Norton, Vice Pres (13)
9 Maplelawn Drive
879-7334
hubert.norton@myfairpoint.net

Ann Gray, Treasurer (14)
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088
grayann8@aol.com

Jan Kilmer (14)
15 Cabot Road
878-2026
ajctb@aol.com

Laurie Jordan, Secretary (13)
259 River Road
879-6467
jjordan263@aol.com

Polly McEwing (15)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862
pollywmce@aol.com

Jennifer Gilbert (15)
3 Alder Lane
871-5338

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

Thad Wolosinski (15)
36 Chelsea Road
879-0282
afcollector@rocketmail.com

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

Essex Celebrates 250 Years

The 250th Essex Anniversary Committee is headed by Trevor Lashua and has met regularly to plan events. Other committee members Robynn Albert, Ann Gray, Tim Jerman, Laurie Jordan, and Hubie and Sherry Norton helped to organize a logo contest and a First Town Meeting re-enactment before the March 4th Town Meeting. Jan Kilmer produced and directed the play, which included Town and Village officials as well as a visit from Benning Wentworth himself (Gill Coates). The committee also recognized assistance from ECHS, Essex Community Players, Essex High School, and Heart and Soul of Essex.



Future plans include a large birthday celebration with other towns on the afternoon of Sunday, June 9th at the Ethan Allen Homestead in conjunction with its Revolutionary War reenactments. Look for more celebrations all year long.

(Photo courtesy of Art Kilmer.)

Lay of the Lost Traveler: the Rest of the Story

By Tim Jerman

Many local residents are familiar with Edward J. Phelps' famous poem. Written between 1880 and 1885, it satirizes Essex Junction for a disastrous misadventure the author suffered while waiting for a transfer to Boston at our local train station in Essex Junction.

It is truly ironic that Edward Phelps is best remembered for a poem he probably dashed off in about a half-hour. If not for a quirk of history, Phelps would be remembered as



one of our great statesmen of his era, along with Justin Morrill, George Edmunds, and Redfield Proctor. Born in Middlebury in 1822, he became a prominent lawyer and scholar from Burlington, a law partner with the Hon. Lucius Chittenden. His father, Samuel Phelps, was a Vermont U. S. Senator who served with Daniel Webster and Henry Clay in the 1840s. In the 1850s Edward was appointed Comptroller of the Currency by President Millard Fillmore.

During the Civil War, Attorney Phelps was an outspoken Democratic "Copperhead," part of the northern wing who opposed the war and sought to make peace with the south without abolishing slavery. In 1864, he unfortunately was quoted at a public meeting calling Abraham Lincoln a "wooden-head" and a "twentieth-rate back-county attorney." He also declared that the north was fighting slavery to "turn loose all the...[racial epithet] and whitewash the...[racial epithet] in the blood of millions."

In 1880, Phelps was the Democratic candidate for Governor. He had no chance of winning against Civil War hero Roswell Farnham, but he made things worse by reaffirming his convictions dating from the Civil War. However, he was acknowledged as a brilliant attorney, and was chosen in 1885 to become President Grover Cleveland's envoy (now ambassador) to Great Britain

for four years. He was very successful, and in 1888 he was President Cleveland's choice to become Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, which would assure his place in Vermont history. Now comes the quirk of history...a prominent group of Boston Irish reacted strongly against Phelps. He was seen as too cozy with the British, and unsympathetic to the cause of Irish independence. Cleveland owed his election of 1884 in part to the solid Irish Democratic vote, and abruptly dropped Phelps from consideration. It was to no avail, as Cleveland lost the presidency in 1888 anyway, and new President Benjamin Harrison replaced Phelps as envoy with Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln (who of course also had a deep Vermont connection at Hildene in Manchester).

Phelps continued his distinguished career, serving as senior Counsel for the U. S. in Paris to resolve the Bering Sea border controversy with Russia. A brilliant orator, his closing argument took eleven days to deliver! In 1891, Phelps was one of a group of chosen dignitaries to speak at the dedication of the Bennington Battle Monument, with President Harrison in attendance before a crowd of 10,000, the largest ever in Vermont to that time. He gave a long history of the American Revolution, and was well-received. His earlier political biases were notably absent in this patriotic speech. Phelps also taught at Yale and died in New Haven, Connecticut in 1910. So, that is a brief history of Edward Phelps; his beautiful home in Burlington is now part of Champlain College and has been restored. Here is his famous poem:

The Lay of the Lost Traveler

*With saddened face and battered hat
And eye that told of black despair,
On wooden bench the traveler sat,
Cursing the fate that brought him there.
"Nine hours," he cried, "we've lingered here,
"With thought intent on distant homes,
"Waiting for the elusive train,
Which, always coming, never comes;
"Till, weary, worn, distressed, forlorn,*

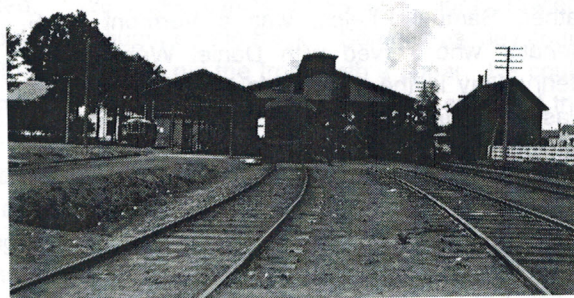
*"And paralyzed in every function,
 "I hope in hell their souls may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"
 "I've traveled east; I've traveled west
 "Over mountains, valleys, plain and river,
 "Midst whirlwind's wrath and tempest's blast,
 "Through railroad's crash and steamboat's
 shiver;
 "And faith and courage faltered not,
 "Nor strength gave way, nor hope was shaken,
 "Until I reached this dismal spot:
 "Of man accursed, of God forsaken!
 "Where strange, new forms of misery
 "Assail men's souls without compunction,
 "and I hope in hell his soul may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"
 "Here Boston waits for Ogdensburgh,
 "And Ogdensburgh for Montreal,
 "And late New York tarrieth,
 "And Saratoga hindereth all!
 "From far Atlantic's wave—swept bays,
 "To Mississippi's turbid tide,
 "All accidents, mishaps, delays,
 "Are gathered here and multiplied;
 "Oh, fellow men, avoid this stop
 "As you would plague or Peter Fink shun!
 "And I hope in hell his soul may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"
 "And long and late conductors tell
 "Of trains delayed or late or slo,
 Till e'en the engine's bell
 Takes up the cry, 'No go! No go!'
 "Oh let me from this hole depart,
 "By any route, so't be a lone one!"
 He cried with madness in his heart,
 And jumped aboard a train; the wrong one.
 And as he vanished in the smoke
 He shouted with redoubled unction,
 "And I hope in hell his soul may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"*

**Peter Funk was a generic term in the 19th century to de-*

scribe a person employed at auctions to artificially raise prices in phony bidding; possibly Peter Funk was a name given by such a person, and it stuck. In any case, a "Peter Funk" was a person to be avoiding by honest folk.—from Dictionary of Americanisms, John Russell Bartlett (1848).

Seen from a distance of over 125 years, the poem now seems both funny and cute. But back then, it was deemed a supreme insult in Essex Junction. Looking back many years later, longtime attorney and Essex Town Clerk Allen Martin said in a 1942 remembrance, "I am not going to read it, it has been quoted until it is threadbare. I was never enthusiastic over that piece of literature. It was written by a man who did not know how to travel. It is not classical, it is not verse, it has no humor, it has no music, it cannot even be followed on the piano."

What do you think? Should we still be offended? In the next ECHO, we'll look at two responses to Phelps that have survived, and talk about each.



Courtesy of:
OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 1967 W.S.C.S.
COOK BOOK



"Good Food and Good
Cooks" make your
meals complete.

Shop the Country Store
Way in Vermont

Barre Montpelier Rd.
Barre, Vt.
and
Forrest Hills,
Winooski, Vt.

THE COUNTRY STORE

COMPLIMENTS OF
A FRIEND

"The Best in Cooking"
in

ESSEX CENTER



Write An Extra Recipe Here:

LUSCIOUS OVERNIGHT SALAD

Mary S. Willard

3 ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY egg yolks
2 Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. pineapple juice
1/8 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. oleo

2 Tbsp. vinegar
1 c. ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY whipped cream
2 c. pineapple tidbits, drained
2 c. tiny marshmallows
2 oranges, cut up
Few cherries for color

Cook first six ingredients in double boiler until thick, stir
constantly and cool. Fold in cream add other ingredients
and chill 24 hours.



Merle Wood first had his store at Essex Center's four
corners and expanded it to Winooski by the Factory
Outlet on West Canal St. He advertised on TV saying,

"Ten loaves of bread for a dollar!"

Shown in 1957, this store burned in 1968.

(Photographs by Evans Knapp)

WE SHARE OUR HISTORY

On March 6th first Graders from Essex Elementary School, armed with clipboards and eager minds, arrived at the Harriet Powell Museum. Our friend, Mrs. Laurie Jordan, was able to show us artifacts of farming, family life and industry here in Essex. She is very passionate about the subject of the history of Essex, and the children were very attentive and curious about the things that they saw. We learned many fascinating facts about farm families, emigration and industry in the area.

We also learned that many Essex families have lived in this spot for several generations! The children participated in a scavenger hunt to locate many of the artifacts that Mrs. Jordan spoke of. We learned about how families would entertain themselves in an age before electronics, with family sing-alongs and storytelling. We learned how important families were and are to one another for their survival! We learned that everyone in earlier Essex families, even children, did their part to help their families on local farms and in local businesses. We found out that our favorite apple trees, at Chapin's Orchard, have been part of a family farming operation that spans over 100 years!

We also discovered that it is very important to preserve our past for generations to come. First graders were very excited to hear about how they could begin to preserve their own history and provide future Essex Elementary School students with an exciting look at their own generation! We are so grateful to Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Norton and the Essex Historical Society for providing this opportunity for First Graders to step out of their classroom and learn more about their community.


—submitted by Ellen Pariseau, First Grade Teacher at Essex Elementary School

Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum

These Trading Cards are a memorial to honor Ron Clapp for his part in preserving and sharing the history of Essex.

Ron gave Essex Walking Tours to 2nd grade students. He led them around the Essex Common; Towers Road to Alder Lane. Then he brought them into this Museum for a history lesson about the various items here and their impact on Essex.


Ron was also a founding member of the Essex Community Historical Society.



George "Ron" W. Clapp 1942 – 2008

Ron Clapp was many things – he was an administrator, a principal, and a teacher but first he was a historian.

Ron Clapp Memorial Trading Card



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ESSEX TOWN EST. 1713 ESSEX VCT. EST. 1870 ESSEX COMM. HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1991
P.O. Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451

Ron Clapp Memorial Cards are given to the visiting classes and are available at our museum: a 20 card pack for \$5.

DONATIONS

Clint Russell: his 2012 Essex *Obituary* Records binder.

John Duby: old car strap-on chains and window defroster suction cups.

Ione Keenan: The Lincoln Inn's "Lay of the Lost Traveler" brochure and a 1952 E. J. Ethan Allen Lodge invitation to Past Masters Night.

Main St. Landing Waterfront: DVD about Burlington's history from the early 1500s to the present day.

Eva Clough: postcard which shows a view from Prospect Hill in Essex Junction.

David Booth: for watching for Essex memorabilia and for selling our books at the Five Corners Antiques.

Marti Powers and the Northfield Savings Bank: old photographs of the Five Corners, Hubbel Falls Dam, and the Brickyard.

Jeff Rodo on behalf of Bernice Hochmuth: an 1864 Selectman of Essex, Vermont item.

Tim Jerman: a Union mini-ball, a replica of a Civil War Confederate bullet.

Ann Gray: old Essex town and village reports.

Lynn Willey: a large Brian Dubie campaign sign.

Bonnie Doble: a wooden tabletop lap desk.

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

*Have **you** looked in your attic or basement lately to see if there is something you can donate to the Harriet Farnsworth Historical Museum?*

Essex History Continues to Grow

This spring, four first grade classes toured our museum to learn more about local family histories. Sherry, Laurie, and Jennifer helped students in Ms. Snedeker's, Ms. Seligman's, Ms. Tracy's, and Ms. Pariseau's classes. Laurie was also pleased to extend the village history to Hiawatha's second grades. Ms. Frankenhoff's students interviewed her about growing up in Essex and she presented village historical pictures and stories to Ms. Funtow's and Ms. McVey's classes. The EES second grades also plan walking tours of "The Centre" with Laurie this spring.

(Ron Clapp on the porch of the museum.)



The Pond Was In the Backyard

By Laurie Jordan



The George R. Clapp Nature Trail across from Essex Elementary School is often used by students, especially on their end of the year Fun Day, with a story book posted throughout the trail. The swampy area lends itself to science projects and history. Alder Brook used to flow in back of St. Pius X Church to empty into the Brown's River (on Route 128) until the 1830 freshet changed its course.

Although I lived on Jericho Road, I could travel through fields where Lamell Development is and along the old Burlington Lamoille Railroad bed to skate on the pond that was left there.

Russell Holmes explained, "The pond was in my backyard." First he had a raft, but then his dad helped him and his brother Bill to make two kayaks with small wooden frames and a roll of canvas. "We painted the canvas and let it soak so it was waterproof." In the early seventies, when he was in Jr. High, Jon Sorrell was excited to hike from Jericho Road to Russell's for a chance to ride in those boats.

"Always the biggest bull frogs," Jon elaborated. "We'd use fishing poles with night crawlers to...dangle them in front of their mouths and they would get caught on the hook." Sometimes they could catch the frogs under the water with fishing nets. Russell used to gig the frogs with a spear. He could purchase the popular four tined gig from Aubuchon's and attach it to a branch. Russell spoke of the muskrats, the beaver huts, and some type of fish.

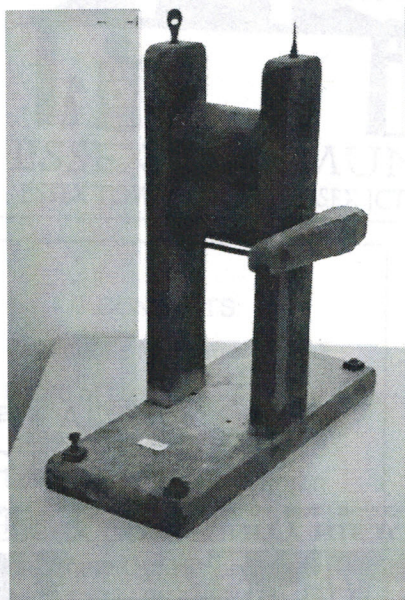
Jon remembered that "in August, the hottest time of the year, you could see where the big snapping turtles had come out,...dug a hole,...laid their eggs, and buried them...to cover them back up in the sunniest part of the swamp." He knew they ate the frogs, because after they had dressed the frogs in the cleaner swamp water area, the next day the remains were gone. You see, on Sunday afternoons, Jon would bring home a couple dozen frog legs in a gallon bucket to barbecue for supper along with vegetables from the garden.

Jon's father would warn him, "Be cautious of the quicksand!" each time he ventured to the swamp. Russell said the surrounding fields had a lot of clay to get stuck in, but no-one ever sunk all the way. The soggy wooded area had a big rock to play on; however, we all dared to climb on that cliff reaching out of the swamp.

Forty years later, Russell still lives close by the swamp but on the other side of Browns River Road. "For the past six or eight years, a pair of geese have nestled in there.... They walked across the road like they owned it." The pond picture shows that it has grown in, but the beavers, cliff, and fun are still there. We can be glad that people from the community built a bridge and pathway to take yet another story book walk along the George R. Clapp Nature Trail.



WHAT IS IT?



Think you know? The above item is an item in the museum!
Please respond to any Board Member with a guess or comment. Good luck!

Do you have a picture that you think could stump the members? Or do you have a picture of something and do not know what on Earth it is? Send it in!



Did you guess what the photo was in the previous edition of the ECHO newsletter? It was a cream separator!

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

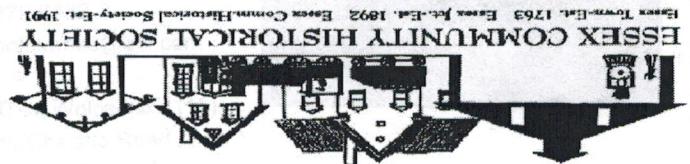
Lifetime (individual, married, civil union) \$100

____ 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

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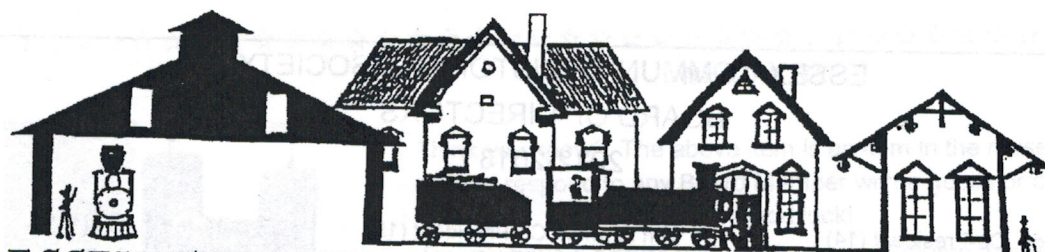
Upcoming Events:

May 25th: Memorial Day Parade. Meet at fairgrounds by 9:30.

Museum reopens June 2nd! Summer hours will be 1 PM—4 PM Sundays until October 6th, and Thursdays 6:00 PM—7:30 PM until August 29th.

250th Celebration Party hosted by Ethan Allen Homestead (with a Revolutionary War Re-enactment all weekend). Sunday June 9th from 3 PM—5 PM.

July 20th Block Party 4 PM—9 PM. ECHS booth will be on Railroad Ave in Essex Junction.



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9 Maplelawn Drive
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hubert.norton@myfairpoint.net

Ann Gray, Treasurer (14)
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088
grayann8@aol.com

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15 Cabot Road
878-2026
ajctb@aol.com

Laurie Jordan, Secretary (13)
259 River Road
879-6467
jjordan263@aol.com

Polly McEwing (15)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862
pollywmce@aol.com

Jennifer Gilbert (15)
3 Alder Lane
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Kathy Dodge (13)
P.O. Box 8264
Essex, VT 05451
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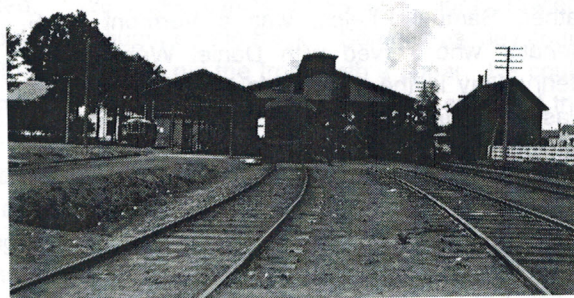
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 "Here Boston waits for Ogdensburgh,
 "And Ogdensburgh for Montreal,
 "And late New York tarrieth,
 "And Saratoga hindereth all!
 "From far Atlantic's wave—swept bays,
 "To Mississippi's turbid tide,
 "All accidents, mishaps, delays,
 "Are gathered here and multiplied;
 "Oh, fellow men, avoid this stop
 "As you would plague or Peter Fink shun!
 "And I hope in hell his soul may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"
 "And long and late conductors tell
 "Of trains delayed or late or slo,
 Till e'en the engine's bell
 Takes up the cry, 'No go! No go!'
 "Oh let me from this hole depart,
 "By any route, so't be a lone one!"
 He cried with madness in his heart,
 And jumped aboard a train; the wrong one.
 And as he vanished in the smoke
 He shouted with redoubled unction,
 "And I hope in hell his soul may dwell
 "Who first invented Essex Junction!"*

**Peter Funk was a generic term in the 19th century to de-*

scribe a person employed at auctions to artificially raise prices in phony bidding; possibly Peter Funk was a name given by such a person, and it stuck. In any case, a "Peter Funk" was a person to be avoiding by honest folk.—from Dictionary of Americanisms, John Russell Bartlett (1848).

Seen from a distance of over 125 years, the poem now seems both funny and cute. But back then, it was deemed a supreme insult in Essex Junction. Looking back many years later, longtime attorney and Essex Town Clerk Allen Martin said in a 1942 remembrance, "I am not going to read it, it has been quoted until it is threadbare. I was never enthusiastic over that piece of literature. It was written by a man who did not know how to travel. It is not classical, it is not verse, it has no humor, it has no music, it cannot even be followed on the piano."

What do you think? Should we still be offended? In the next ECHO, we'll look at two responses to Phelps that have survived, and talk about each.



Courtesy of:
OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 1967 W.S.C.S.
COOK BOOK



"Good Food and Good
Cooks" make your
meals complete.

Shop the Country Store
Way in Vermont

Barre Montpelier Rd.
Barre, Vt.
and
Forrest Hills,
Winooski, Vt.

THE COUNTRY STORE

COMPLIMENTS OF
A FRIEND

"The Best in Cooking"
in

ESSEX CENTER



Write An Extra Recipe Here:

LUSCIOUS OVERNIGHT SALAD

Mary S. Willard

3 ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY egg yolks
2 Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. pineapple juice
1/8 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. oleo

2 Tbsp. vinegar
1 c. ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY whipped cream
2 c. pineapple tidbits, drained
2 c. tiny marshmallows
2 oranges, cut up
Few cherries for color

Cook first six ingredients in double boiler until thick, stir
constantly and cool. Fold in cream add other ingredients
and chill 24 hours.



Merle Wood first had his store at Essex Center's four
corners and expanded it to Winooski by the Factory
Outlet on West Canal St. He advertised on TV saying,

"Ten loaves of bread for a dollar!"

Shown in 1957, this store burned in 1968.

(Photographs by Evans Knapp)

WE SHARE OUR HISTORY

On March 6th first Graders from Essex Elementary School, armed with clipboards and eager minds, arrived at the Harriet Powell Museum. Our friend, Mrs. Laurie Jordan, was able to show us artifacts of farming, family life and industry here in Essex. She is very passionate about the subject of the history of Essex, and the children were very attentive and curious about the things that they saw. We learned many fascinating facts about farm families, emigration and industry in the area.

We also learned that many Essex families have lived in this spot for several generations! The children participated in a scavenger hunt to locate many of the artifacts that Mrs. Jordan spoke of. We learned about how families would entertain themselves in an age before electronics, with family sing-alongs and storytelling. We learned how important families were and are to one another for their survival! We learned that everyone in earlier Essex families, even children, did their part to help their families on local farms and in local businesses. We found out that our favorite apple trees, at Chapin's Orchard, have been part of a family farming operation that spans over 100 years!

We also discovered that it is very important to preserve our past for generations to come. First graders were very excited to hear about how they could begin to preserve their own history and provide future Essex Elementary School students with an exciting look at their own generation! We are so grateful to Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Norton and the Essex Historical Society for providing this opportunity for First Graders to step out of their classroom and learn more about their community.


—submitted by Ellen Pariseau, First Grade Teacher at Essex Elementary School

Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum

These Trading Cards are a memorial to honor Ron Clapp for his part in preserving and sharing the history of Essex.

Ron gave Essex Walking Tours to 2nd grade students. He led them around the Essex Common; Towers Road to Alder Lane. Then he brought them into this Museum for a history lesson about the various items here and their impact on Essex.


Ron was also a founding member of the Essex Community Historical Society.



George "Ron" W. Clapp 1942 – 2008

Ron Clapp was many things – he was an administrator, a principal, and a teacher but first he was a historian.

Ron Clapp Memorial Trading Card



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ESSEX TOWN EST. 1793 ESSEX ICT. EST. 1870 ESSEX COMM. HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1991
P.O. Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451

Ron Clapp Memorial Cards are given to the visiting classes and are available at our museum: a 20 card pack for \$5.

DONATIONS

Clint Russell: his 2012 Essex *Obituary* Records binder.

John Duby: old car strap-on chains and window defroster suction cups.

Ione Keenan: The Lincoln Inn's "Lay of the Lost Traveler" brochure and a 1952 E. J. Ethan Allen Lodge invitation to Past Masters Night.

Main St. Landing Waterfront: DVD about Burlington's history from the early 1500s to the present day.

Eva Clough: postcard which shows a view from Prospect Hill in Essex Junction.

David Booth: for watching for Essex memorabilia and for selling our books at the Five Corners Antiques.

Marti Powers and the Northfield Savings Bank: old photographs of the Five Corners, Hubbel Falls Dam, and the Brickyard.

Jeff Rodo on behalf of Bernice Hochmuth: an 1864 Selectman of Essex, Vermont item.

Tim Jerman: a Union mini-ball, a replica of a Civil War Confederate bullet.

Ann Gray: old Essex town and village reports.

Lynn Willey: a large Brian Dubie campaign sign.

Bonnie Doble: a wooden tabletop lap desk.

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

*Have **you** looked in your attic or basement lately to see if there is something you can donate to the Harriet Farnsworth Historical Museum?*

Essex History Continues to Grow

This spring, four first grade classes toured our museum to learn more about local family histories. Sherry, Laurie, and Jennifer helped students in Ms. Snedeker's, Ms. Seligman's, Ms. Tracy's, and Ms. Pariseau's classes. Laurie was also pleased to extend the village history to Hiawatha's second grades. Ms. Frankenhoff's students interviewed her about growing up in Essex and she presented village historical pictures and stories to Ms. Funtow's and Ms. McVey's classes. The EES second grades also plan walking tours of "The Centre" with Laurie this spring.

(Ron Clapp on the porch of the museum.)



The Pond Was In the Backyard

By Laurie Jordan



The George R. Clapp Nature Trail across from Essex Elementary School is often used by students, especially on their end of the year Fun Day, with a story book posted throughout the trail. The swampy area lends itself to science projects and history. Alder Brook used to flow in back of St. Pius X Church to empty into the Brown's River (on Route 128) until the 1830 freshet changed its course.

Although I lived on Jericho Road, I could travel through fields where Lamell Development is and along the old Burlington Lamoille Railroad bed to skate on the pond that was left there.

Russell Holmes explained, "The pond was in my backyard." First he had a raft, but then his dad helped him and his brother Bill to make two kayaks with small wooden frames and a roll of canvas. "We painted the canvas and let it soak so it was waterproof." In the early seventies, when he was in Jr. High, Jon Sorrell was excited to hike from Jericho Road to Russell's for a chance to ride in those boats.

"Always the biggest bull frogs," Jon elaborated. "We'd use fishing poles with night crawlers to...dangle them in front of their mouths and they would get caught on the hook." Sometimes they could catch the frogs under the water with fishing nets. Russell used to gig the frogs with a spear. He could purchase the popular four tined gig from Aubuchon's and attach it to a branch. Russell spoke of the muskrats, the beaver huts, and some type of fish.

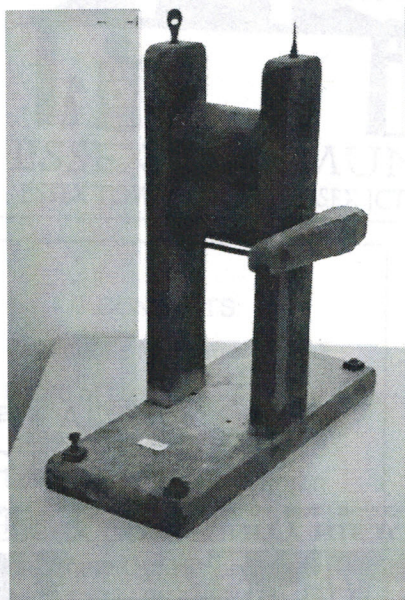
Jon remembered that "in August, the hottest time of the year, you could see where the big snapping turtles had come out,...dug a hole,...laid their eggs, and buried them...to cover them back up in the sunniest part of the swamp." He knew they ate the frogs, because after they had dressed the frogs in the cleaner swamp water area, the next day the remains were gone. You see, on Sunday afternoons, Jon would bring home a couple dozen frog legs in a gallon bucket to barbecue for supper along with vegetables from the garden.

Jon's father would warn him, "Be cautious of the quicksand!" each time he ventured to the swamp. Russell said the surrounding fields had a lot of clay to get stuck in, but no-one ever sunk all the way. The soggy wooded area had a big rock to play on; however, we all dared to climb on that cliff reaching out of the swamp.

Forty years later, Russell still lives close by the swamp but on the other side of Browns River Road. "For the past six or eight years, a pair of geese have nestled in there.... They walked across the road like they owned it." The pond picture shows that it has grown in, but the beavers, cliff, and fun are still there. We can be glad that people from the community built a bridge and pathway to take yet another story book walk along the George R. Clapp Nature Trail.

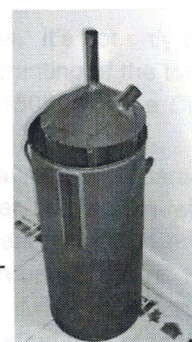


WHAT IS IT?



Think you know? The above item is an item in the museum!
Please respond to any Board Member with a guess or comment. Good luck!

Do you have a picture that you think could stump the members? Or do you have a picture of something and do not know what on Earth it is? Send it in!



Did you guess what the photo was in the previous edition of the ECHO newsletter? It was a cream separator!

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



Upcoming Events:

May 25th: Memorial Day Parade. Meet at fairgrounds by 9:30.

Museum reopens June 2nd! Summer hours will be 1 PM—4 PM Sundays until October 6th, and Thursdays 6:00 PM—7:30 PM until August 29th.

250th Celebration Party hosted by Ethan Allen Homestead (with a Revolutionary War Re-enactment all weekend). Sunday June 9th from 3 PM—5 PM.

July 20th Block Party 4 PM—9 PM. ECHS booth will be on Railroad Ave in Essex Junction.