

ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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THE ECHO

The Newsletter of the
 Essex Community Historical Society
 Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont
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President's Message

As the mountains flare with bright fall colors, we on the ECHS board take the time to review what we have accomplished in 2014. With our inaugural series of Tales & Treasures of Essex, we have brought the stories of Essex people and places to a new audience in our community. An average of forty-five people, many of them new to ECHS, attended each program, and their feedback was enthusiastic. The free Door Prize drawings at our events were very popular, as were the pastries baked by Jan Kilmer! TD Bank has been a major underwriter for the 2014 series, and we extend a sincere thank you to them for their generous support.

At the biennial Vermont History Expo, sponsored by Vermont Historical Society, ECHS displayed Essex history in a wonderful photographic exhibit put together by Laurie Jordan and Tim Jerman. Those displays were exhibited again at the Essex Junction Block Party in July and at the Champlain Valley Fair in August. At all these events, we were able to give out our new museum brochure put together by graphic designer, Damaris Drummond, of the Dark Room Gallery.

We say goodbye to Barb Chapin as board member. With former board member Kathy Dodge, Barb will continue to write about Essex for the History Space series in the Burlington Free Press. We also thank Kathy for organizing displays of artifacts from the museum collection at both the Brownell Library and the Essex Free Library. And we extend thanks to new board member, Denise Groll, for her work on publicity posters and for setting up our new Facebook page. Denise is also working on a web page for ECHS.

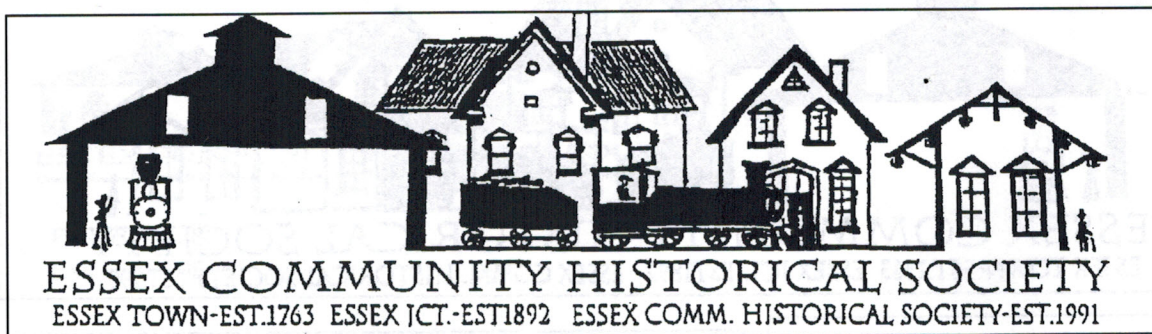
We thank the small but dedicated group of volunteers who kept the museum open to visitors this summer, particularly those who gave up Sunday afternoons to be available! Mary Willard wins top honors for multiple Sundays at the museum in 2014! The museum had more visitors in 2014, and many of them reconnected with memories of Essex when they were growing up.

Because things are changing fast at ECHS, the board is inaugurating something else new in 2014—an **Annual Giving Campaign**. Additional financial gifts to this fund will be used to cover the increased cost of running the museum. An article explaining the campaign appears on an inside page of the newsletter, and a donor envelope is enclosed for the use of members.

Finally, ECHS has two exciting events still to celebrate with you! On Wednesday, November 12 at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall, Adam Boyce, Living History Presenter, will bring us his program, "**The Old Country Fiddler: Charles Ross Taggart, Traveling Entertainer.**" Taggart was an entertainer from Vermont with a national following, and Boyce will be recreating his theater skits and playing period music. Boyce is himself a Vermont State Fiddler Champion, so there will be some toe-tapping music as well as a lot of laughs! This is a family program, so bring the kids! And of course, we end the year with the Essex Tree Lighting & Sing Along on the first Friday in December.

Thank you for your support in 2014, and we'll see you at our ECHS events!

Eva Clough, Co-President
 Paula DeMichele, Co-President



ECHS Board Announces Annual Giving Campaign

Dear Friend and Member of ECHS,

Because you have supported the work of Essex Community Historical Society—as a member, a program attendee, a donor or a friend—we want to thank you for your part in making 2014 one of our most successful years ever in presenting the stories of Essex history! And we are asking for your help to continue this good work.

Your support has allowed the board to keep the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum open to the public and to make both the collections and the stories of Essex history available to visitors. Programs in our new 2014 **Tales & Treasures of Essex** series has drawn an average of forty-five people. These programs have been underwritten by our local sponsors, in particular by the generous support of our major sponsor, **TD Bank**.

But the expense of maintaining the museum and ECHS as a nonprofit entity must be paid for out of other funds. Briefly, the Society's financial structure falls into three main parts: the funds budgeted by the Town for the museum each year; funds available through membership renewals and irregular direct donations; and dedicated funds used only for specific purposes. Dedicated funds in the Society budget include the Ron Clapp Memorial Fund and the Tales & Treasures of Essex Fund. And ECHS has now added a dedicated fund for the restoration of the gravestone of Abram Stevens. Stevens was the builder of Lincoln Hall, a co-founder of the First Congregational Church in Essex Junction and a friend of Ira Allen.

The Town Fund and the General Membership Fund pay for items needed to run the museum and its operations, e.g. a laptop computer and projector, and to pay for general bills, e.g. Officer's Insurance for the board and other required payments. Each year, the General Membership Fund becomes depleted.

To ensure financial stability in the General Fund, the board is initiating an Annual Giving Campaign for ECHS. The Annual Giving Campaign envelope enclosed in this issue of the ECHO allows our members to support the ECHS General Fund by donating an Additional Gift for 2014. We welcome an Additional Gift in any amount. We invite our supporters to consider the different giving levels and to give as they are able. We also now invite our members to donate such a gift in honor of, or in memory of, a person or group of their choice. Both the names of the donors and the names of the persons specified for these gifts will be printed in the spring 2015 edition of the ECHO newsletter. Members are also welcome to designate their gift for the Abram Stevens Restoration Fund or Tales & Treasures of Essex 2015.

Your Additional Gift will keep us moving forward in preserving Essex history for future generations. We thank all of our members who support the ongoing work of ECHS with an Additional Gift!

Eva Clough, Co-President
Paula DeMichele, Co-President

**Thanksgiving in Essex,
1822—An Eyewitness Account!!**

By, Tim Jerman



We are fortunate to have a wonderful history of an early Essex family, the Castles. In 1899, at age 82, William Wallace Ingraham wrote a detailed history of his childhood. He grew up in his grandfather Abel Castle's house, and well-remembered the stories of his childhood living with a pioneer family. As an adult, Ingraham was a successful engineer living in Chicago, and left behind a memoir and genealogy for his family to enjoy. Ingraham's other grandfather was Revolutionary War veteran William Ingraham; his father was renowned Methodist minister Chester Ingraham. All lived in Essex on the Weed Road near the fertile lands bordering the Brown's River.

Abel Castle, the central figure in this story, was a larger-than-life character. He came to Jericho and Essex from Pawlet by way of Connecticut after the American Revolution. He had a brush with fame as a soldier who rescued Ethan and Ira Allen's cousin Remember Baker in 1772 from New Yorkers who sought to nullify the land claims of the Allen clan. Ingraham described the early settlers this way: *"Our fathers, tried in the fires of the Revolution, which had consumed their substance, were men of nerve and great physical power. They came here to make a home. We have heard and read of their privations, sufferings, and destitution in the first years of their life in the woods; how that many of their rude cabins were without doors and without floors; how the storms beat through their roofs and wild beasts howled around their dwellings at night; how they had no cellars and nothing to put in them; how scanty their wardrobe and still more scanty their furniture; how a kettle or two, a few pewter plates, and wooden trenches, two or three knives and forks, and some three-legged stools and a straw bed in the corner constituted their household articles; how, worse than all, they would not have any bread for weeks and but a scant supply of meat."*

Life was hard in Chittenden County for Abel and his family. Ingraham describes how it was right before Essex became an organized town. *"The year 1785 proved a*

very trying season. The rapid depreciation of continental currency distressed them severely {Vermont, an independent state at the time, printed some coins in 1786 but never issued paper currency}. At this period, the generation then on the stage were strangers to many of the conveniences and comforts of life. Their farming utensils were clumsy, their clothing homespun and coarse, but durable. The men wore tow shirts, striped woolen frocks and leather aprons. In the winter they wore shoes, excluding the snow with woolen leggings, fastened down over the top of the shoes by strings. Boots were rare; surtouts or overcoats were rarer still. Tea and coffee were almost unknown. Corn, beans, and barley broths were in constant use. Hasty-pudding and milk was the standing supper. On the Sabbath, for lunch, instances were not wanting when men carried in their pockets a few cold boiled potatoes."

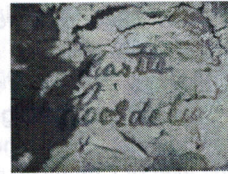
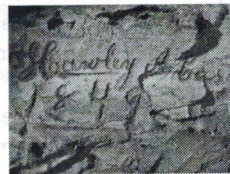
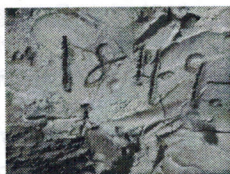
Now, fast forward to November 1822. The Castle family has prospered, living in the old house built by Abel and his father (it still stands and is occupied today!). Ingraham well-remembers the festive occasion from his boyhood. *"The reason for relating this particular Thanksgiving story of 1822 are as follows: David Castle, son of Samuel Castle, resided with his son, Abel Castle, most of the time up to his death. He at the time was 97 years old and had three living sons and one daughter. Abel Castle's sons and daughters, with their respective families, could be present. The 1822 Thanksgiving festival was particularly impressed upon my mind when a child at the old home. The day appointed, the girls became extremely busy in making festival garments in order to make a good appearance on Thanksgiving Day. They talked over their bonnets, turning and readjusting them on their heads; they talked about ribbons and trimmings and all the bonnets in town. During this time, the children were chopping mincemeat and pounding allspice, cloves, and cinnamon in a great lignumvitae mortar, and the sound of this pounding rang through the great chamber of Abel Castle's house. Now came on the work in earnest. Pies were made by twenties and forties, made of everything on the earth and under the earth. At the right of the great fireplace was the great brick oven, with a great roaring fire, volcanic billows of flames snapping and gurgling as if the old fellow had entered into the frolic of the hour. When his great heart was warmed up to the proper heat the fire was drawn, the oven swabbed, the pies and the cakes baked, till the pantry shelves were literally filled. The old oven was then reheated for the baking of Indian and plum puddings, the chicken pies, stuffed turkeys, goose, and roasted pig and other good things."*

Grandmother's old brick oven was a true Puritan institution and braced up devotional habits of good housewives by the capital care he took of whatever was committed to his capacious bosom."

Ingraham goes on to describe the festivities as family and guests arrive at the homestead. "Then commenced much carving and laughing, talking and eating, all showing that cheerful ability of the Castle family to dispatch the provisions which was the ruling spirit of the hour. After the meat came the puddings, then the endless array of pies and cakes, till human nature was actually bewildered and overpowered by the tempting variety. Even the children turned from the profusion offered to them and wondered what was the matter that they could eat no more. When all was over David Castle, born 1725, who married Phoebe Sanford, 1747, arose at the head of the table. A fine, venerable-looking man of ninety-seven, as he stood there with silver hair flowing in curls down each side of his clear, calm face! He called their attention to a recital of the mercies of God in His dealings with their family. It was sort of a family history, for he went over and touched upon the various events which had happened and he closed all with the time-honored text expressing the hope that as years passed by we might so number our days as to apply our hearts into wisdom. {David died the next year, at age 98; he had been blind for years.} The dinner over, the elderly women washed up the dishes, put the house in order and the men folks went out to the barn to look at the cattle and walked over the farm and talked of the crops." Later in the day, the minister and his lady arrived for a visit. When the grandfather clock struck ten, the great events of Thanksgiving day 1822 ended.

Ingraham's remembrance gives much detail of what life was like in the early nineteenth century. Although he lived well into the Industrial Age, he never forgot his roots in Essex and the richness of his childhood. When Abel Castle died at age 95 in 1843, he had 95 living children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren! Undoubtedly some of our readers are descended from this remarkable man and his remarkable wives (there were four, three died at early ages). Ingraham's "History of the Castle Family: From 1635 to 1900" is one of the best historical documents we have of early Essex; it can be read online in its entirety by anyone interested. An interesting sidebar: in the basement of the Castle house, names etched in mortar during the building of an addition (or a repair) in 1849 are clearly visible. They were done by Hawley A. Castle and his wife Cordelia Bellow Castle, when in their twenties.

Hawley was Marshall Castle's youngest son, Abel's grandson.



"The Best in Cooking" in ESSEX CENTER

HASTY PUDDING

Mrs. Elaine French

3/4 c. maple-flavored
syrup
1/3 c. water
1 c. sifted all purpose
flour
1 1/2 tsp. double-acting
baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 c. firmly packed dark
brown sugar
1/2 c. ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 c. ETHAN ALLEN
CREAMERY butter or
margarine, melted
1/4 c. dark seedless raisins
or broken walnut meats

Combine syrup and water in saucepan and bring to boil. Mean-while, measure sifted flour. Add baking powder and salt, butter, and mix only until smooth. Pour into greased 1 qt. casserole or baking dish. Sprinkle with raisins or nuts. Pour boiling syrup over batter. (This makes a sauce in bottom of pan after pudding is baked).
Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 35-40 minutes. Serve warm with ETHAN ALLEN CREAMERY light cream.
Makes 5-6 substantial servings.

Courtesy of Essex Center Methodist Church WSCS

Tales and Treasures of Essex Series Ends Successful Season

By Paula DeMichele

Our inaugural 2014 **Tales & Treasures of Essex** series has been a success! Each program has drawn around forty-five people, both members and newcomers to ECHS, and has given both enjoyment and fresh insight into Essex history.

The series opener was our **Family Day and Museum Open House** on June 2. A sunny June Sunday afternoon was the backdrop for Jericho musician, Derek Burkins, as our entertainment headliner under the trees on the lawn (drivers at the traffic light were rolling down their windows to hear his songs!). Ann Paietta and Caitlin Corless, from the staff of the Essex Free Library delighted children and adults by making balloon dogs. Also, Ellen Pariseau wowed everyone with her beautiful face painting—there must have been quite a few Essex children who didn't want to wash their faces before bedtime that night! A special children's tour of the museum by Laurie Jordan drew grade school age children, and many adults looked in to see the exhibits. Lucille Allen, Mary Willard, Barb Chapin, Eva Clough, Paula DeMichele, Polly McEwing, and Jan Kilmer greeted visitors. Tim Jerman and Thad Wolosinski took pictures of the fun and chatted with families. State legislators, Linda Myers and Linda Waite-Simpson, dropped in and stayed to listen to the music.

The raffle of a \$65 gift basket from Sweet Clover Market was popular, as was the free door prize of \$50 gift certificate and perennial plant from Program Sponsor Sara Saltino of Full Circle Gardens of Essex. Special thanks to our Major Sponsor, TD Bank and Karen Torrey, manager of the Essex branch. If you missed Family Day this year, never fear. Derek and the rest of the crew will be back next year on the first Sunday in June 2015, for an even better Family Day celebration.

July brought a reprise of Tim Jerman's power point program of W. C. Sawyer's historic Essex photographs, and in August, Maureen Labenski gave a truly fascinating storytelling session on the family of Abram Stevens and their place in Essex history. To celebrate September as Vermont Archeology Month, Brennan Gauthier of VTRANS brought his visual presentation on the archeological history of Essex beginning with Paleo-Indians and ending with recent digs in our area. And October brought Charlotte historian, Dan Cole, to our Annual Meeting with a deeply moving account of the suffering of Chittenden County Civil War soldiers and how their wounds were treated medically.

For members who have not yet attended these programs, the last one of the series is coming up and is not to be missed: "**The Old Country Fiddler: Charles Ross Taggart, Traveling Entertainer**" will be presented by Adam Boyce, Living History Presenter and Vermont Fiddler Champion. He will present an hour of Taggart's theater skits and period music. We will end the year with our **Annual Tree Lighting and Sing Along** the first Friday in December. Check out our new Facebook page for more information. And see you there!



Above: Dan Cole's presentation at the ECHS Annual Meeting at the Maple Street Hall referred to Vermont Civil War soldiers' letters, medical treatments, and new methods that came about during that time.

More on the next page!



ECCHS extends our thanks to the sponsors who made **Tales & Treasures of Essex** possible:



Series Sponsor:

Will Parkinson/Fort Ethan Allen Industrial Park

Program Sponsors:

Full Circle Gardens of Essex

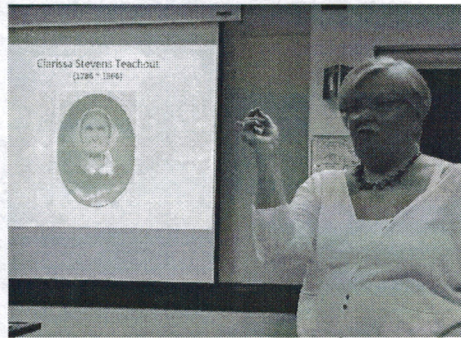
Gary's Barbershop

Merchants Bank, Essex Junction

Phoenix Books

Sweet Clover Market

West Meadow Farm Gluten Free Bakery



Maureen Labenski shows a picture of Clarissa Stevens Teachout and shares her Abram Stevens family ancestral history at the Brownell Library in August.

The Teachouts of Essex

Four generations of Teachout family, some from as far away as California, met in Essex Junction to tour the Village Cemetery on July 15, 2014. ECHS co-president, Tim Jerman, led a tour which included 25 family members and prominent relatives by marriage buried here over a 200-year span. Highlights included stories of a man named Teachout being the first white man in Vermont, as recorded by Champlain in 1609. Early Teachouts were also known as Tichouts. The kids learned that they were related to Ray Collins, an early baseball star who pitched the first World Series game at Fenway Park in 1912 and the first game ever at Centennial Field in Burlington in 1906. The Teachouts once owned all the land IBM now sits on, and Henry Teachout built one or more dams on the Winooski River near the power station. All in all, a very enjoyable day for one of Essex's great families!



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2014-2015

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☐ Yes! I would like to be added to an e-mail distribution list for event notification.

Yes! I would like to receive the ECHO via e-mail.

Circle relevant Annual Membership Category or Lifetime:

Individual \$10

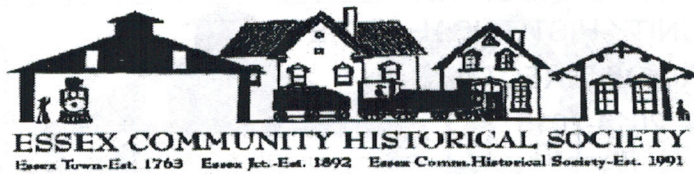
Family \$15

Senior (60 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.



P.O. Box 8388
Essex, VT 05451

UPCOMING EVENTS!

November 12 at 7p.m.: "The Old Country Fiddler: Charles Ross Taggart, Traveling Entertainer."
Program by Adam Boyce, Living History Presenter. At Memorial Hall, 3 Towers Road in Essex.

December 5 at 6:30 p.m.: Christmas Tree Lighting and Sing Along. Meet at EES Cafeteria at 6:15 and walk to the Essex Common.

