

ESSEX, VT COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



President's Message

We have passed the Spring equinox and are on our way to a summer that brings many changes to the Harriet Farnsworth Powell museum. Since the 2014 Annual Meeting, the ECHS board has seen changes in its members. Tim Jerman has stepped down as Co-President, and Paula DeMichele now serves in that position. We thank Tim for taking on yet one more commitment in his busy schedule during his two years as an officer. Laurie Jordan, who served as Secretary, has left the board to move on to other things, but will continue to give museum tours to classes from Essex schools from both the village and town. Denise Groll is now the Secretary. And the wonderful, new layout for this issue of our newsletter is the work of Damaris Drummond, our graphic designer extraordinaire.

We also initiated our first Annual Giving Campaign to raise unrestricted funds for ECHS. Thanks to the great generosity of our members, the campaign was a complete success. With this issue of the ECHO, we include our first Annual Report for ECHS prepared by our Treasurer, Ann Gray. The report shows donations received for the Annual Giving Campaign as well as other museum finances. The ECHS board presents this report as a move toward greater financial transparency for the members and for the purpose of attracting more grantors and sponsors.

But the biggest change for 2015 is the rearrangement of our museum exhibits. Board members consulted with Prof. Susan Ouellette from the History Department of St. Michael's College and with Amanda Gustin from the Vermont Historical Society as to how we might better display our collections. Funds from the Annual Giving Campaign have supported many of the changes. The museum will open on June 7th with new arrangements of our permanent displays in the main room, and rotating temporary exhibits from other organizations in the smaller rear room. That room will also be set up for use as a research area for people wishing to use our collection of historical records.

We invite each of our members to join us on June 7th from 1 – 4 p.m. for the 2nd Annual Family Day & Museum Open House. We will be outside on the lawn again this year with live music, games and activities and cake and ice cream for the closing. This is especially a day for children, so bring the grandkids! Family Day kicks off our 2015 Tales & Treasures of Essex History program series. A separate listing of our summer events is included in this newsletter. So we'll see you there!

Eva Clough, Co-President

Paula DeMichele, Co-President



The Newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex & Essex Junction, Vermont
P.O. Box 8388
Essex, VT 05451
Spring 2015

essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net



Tales for a Fantastic Year!
Mark your calendars now for the 2015
Tales & Treasures of Essex History



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2nd Annual Family Day & Museum Open House
1 – 4 p.m.
Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum
Outside on the New Common at Essex Center

Live Music by Derek Burkins, Jericho Singer/Songwriter
Balloon Dogs, Face Painting, Checkers Game Table for kids 9 to 12
Tours of the new Museum exhibits
Cake and Ice Cream to close
Free Door Prize **Raffle**

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**1st Annual Birthday Celebration for Harriet
Sunday, August 23rd, 2015
2 – 3 p.m.
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Essex Center**

**Essex Center was a thriving railroad center during the Civil War era.
Join Joshua Knox of Essex Center United Methodist Church
as he takes us back in time to Essex Center in the 1860's.**

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Free Door Prize Drawing & Refreshments will follow each program.



One Hundred Years Ago in Essex- a 1915 history and humorous poem by Ellen Persis Williams Child

researched & written by Tim Jerman



Main Street, Essex Junction, around 1900

Ellen Persis Williams Child was the sister of Charles Glover Williams, who was the Essex Junction railroad station agent for 42.5 years from 1860 to 1902. She came to Essex after her husband died to live with her niece Harriet Williams Baldwin and family. The Baldwins lived on Main St. in the recently demolished white house which was the Kolvoord-Overton law office for many years. Ellen was a member of the "Fortnightly Club", and delivered an address to them in February 1915. These clubs were social, literary, and musical "improvement" societies. They existed nationwide, and many Vermont towns had them; a few persist today.

Ellen must have been steeped in Essex tradition from her brother's long service and family ties. She has left us an interesting ten-page history of the village, and a very funny poem (comments added to identify some of the characters). Her history was also informed by friends Alma Teachout Johnson and Mrs. Walcott Beach, who were both descended from early Essex families. From recollections like these, we learn about how our current village evolved. For instance, Ellen describes the brick house built by "Uncle Byron" Stevens on Main Street, where the A.W. Rich Funeral Home now stands. Byron Stevens was the longest-living son of Abram Stevens, the founding father of Essex Junction. Byron sold the house to Enoch Howe (it appears on the 1868 Beers Map in his name). The house burned, and was replaced by Homer Wright around 1900 with the beautiful building still standing (photo).

We learn from Ellen Child that a Mr. Parmalee was the first station agent in Essex Junction. Her brother Charles arrived in 1860 and served until 1902! He may be one of the unidentified people in old photos of the station. Ellen attributes the famous line "The village cemetery was very near the train. That is where they bury the dead who die waiting for the train" to Wendell Phillips, the famous orator and abolitionist. It is likely that her brother relayed that story. Another one of human interest tells of Rouleau's harness shop at 5 Corners, a low-slung building angling in where the TD Bank now stands:

"You all remember the old shed and harness shop, which gained the reputation of being the most gossipy place in town. It was a great gathering place for the unemployed. When the gatherings were too large to be accommodated on the inside the overflow occupied the fence on the outside and the conversation was keyed to a pitch that all could hear. The remarks that floated out were not always such that a lady could hear without embarrassment and as a consequence the ladies usually passed by on the other side of the street, when they had occasion to go that way. One daily visitor was Nate Richardson, commonly called "straight edge". He was the singer of the select company that foregathered there and his favorite song was "In the Sweet By and By" which he sung seemingly, for the whole neighborhood. Mr. Roleau used to say that they made him sing to close the meeting."

Ellen Child closes her recollections with this witty poem, read on February 19, 1915 on "Gentleman's Night" at the Ladies Fortnightly Club. Her friendly "roast" includes a who's who of prominent Essex men of the time, some quite well known. It's not clear where they met, possibly they moved from house to house every other week. There was a men's club in the Brownell Block, so it's possible they met there. In 1915, Essex Junction had a few cars, but horse and buggy were still seen. The first sidewalk was paved on Park Street, and the Great War was beginning in Europe, so great change was just around the corner. In any case, Ellen Child's work has survived for our enjoyment a hundred years later; it may be read in its entirety in the Vermont Room of the Brownell Library.

Poem on page 4.



“Men of the Fortnightly Club”

The Butcher, the Baker, and the Brick Maker
These three all went out to take tea
With the “Ladies Fortnightly Club”
Who, by the way, think they are the whole hub,
But I will soon show them there are others in
this hub, the Gentlemen of the Fortnightly Club.
A stands for Adams, a very fine preacher,
Who for our boys, is an excellent teacher.



A stands for Atwood, a traveling man, and I am told, He carries all kinds of goods that have ever been sold
B stands for Bailey, our Secretary of State, As we all know, Guy was never too late
C stands for Cady, who lives on a farm, Of him I am sure no one could speak harm.
C stands for Chapman, so dignified and quiet, We would all be surprised if he was found in a riot
C the next for Mr. Cox as house builder is grand, His wife is an honor to our little band
D stands for Donahue, our Postmaster to be, He will serve us all finely, as you will soon see
D stands for Drury, our honored brick maker, As he bakes his own bricks he must be the baker
F stands for Ferrin, the doctor so genial and fine, One could tell of much good he has done in his line
F also for Fletcher, our butcher and grocer, with Ruth for a partner he'll succeed we all know, sir
G stands for a traveling man whose name is Grow, We can only judge him by his wife, whom we know
G stands for Guild, an auto repairer, in his dealings with men I'm sure there's none fairer.
H stands for a man, quite large and tall, But of him have no fear, though his name is Harm Hall
H stands for Hobart, our dignified express man, Who accommodates all whenever he can.
H is also for Hunt, who must not be neglected, He showed good taste by the wife he selected.
J stands for Johnson, whose first name is Dan, he furnishes coal on the very best plan.
M stands for Marvin, and without any jest, He as a physician, is one of the best
M stands for our rural postman McBride, Who we think in his family must take great pride.
M is also for Metcalf, postal clerk of renown, We are all glad to claim him as a man of our town.
M stands for Mudgett, dealer in stoves and their fixtures, And of all iron ware has a regular mixture.
P stands for Putnam, of whom I've nothing to tell, As I have never met him, on hill or in dell,
But, since writing those lines, I have heard it said, that possibly Putnam might paint the town red.
R stands for Rice, not the kind that one cooks, but a man who'll get your taxes if your name's on his books.
R stands for Remington, Orvis by name, He is jolly and genial and always the same.
S stands for Sisson, who has completed a plan, For a course of free lectures to benefit man.
He preaches each Sunday the gospel of truth, To all who will listen, be they adults or youth.
S stands for the traveling salesman, Dwight Sister, whose business is selling the best cream separator.
S stands for Stevens, who sells “ready made”, Perhaps he might tell you some “tricks of the trade”.
Wallace C claims the S as the first of his name, To which he has a right, as it's spelled just the same.
His care of the school house is worthy of mention, As the teachers all say without any dissention.
W for Webster, one may know by his look, The wife that he married is a very fine cook.
W stands for Whitney, the last on my list, I am sure he would play you a good game of whist.
Now, friends, if not pleased with the rhymes you have heard, or think them quite foolish or even absurd,
Or perhaps you may think them a little too mild,
Just please to remember, they were written by a Child!

--Mrs. Ellen P. Child



Our Current Fundraising Project: Abram Steven's Gravestone Restoration

The Essex Community Historical Society (ECHS) is currently fundraising for the restoration of Abram Steven's gravestone in the Village Cemetery.

As most of you know, Abram Stevens was one of the founding fathers of the Town of Essex. He arrived in Essex in 1784 and built a log cabin off from present Route 15 near the Town/Village line. Abram was a member of the Green Mountain Boys serving with Ethan Allen and also was a special aide to General Montgomery in the attack on Montreal. Abram's occupation was a joiner and his craftsmanship can be seen in many of the buildings in Burlington, including Grassmount. On his death in 1826, Abram was buried in the Village cemetery. Over the 188 years since his death, the weather has taken a toll on Abram's gravestone to the point where it is now completely illegible. Luckily, one of Abram's great, great, great granddaughters has done a rubbing of the gravestone. ECHS's goal in this project is to restore the deteriorated stone to its former condition. To accomplish this, we have contacted a granite firm who proposes fabricating a new granite gravestone using the rubbing as the pattern. This replicated stone will be fixed over the original gravestone.

The cost of the newly fabricated stone is approximately \$5,000. ECHS is planning on submitting grant applications to cover a portion of the funding. However, most granting agencies require a local match, usually 50/50.

Maureen Labenski, the great, great, great granddaughter who did the gravestone rubbing, kicked off our fundraising campaign last August by donating her honorarium from her talk at the 2014 Tales and Treasures of Essex along with a personal donation. Tim Jerman and Dan Cole also donated their honorarium toward the gravestone restoration.

Maureen, along with two of her local cousins, wrote and sent letters to other descendants of Abram Stevens. These descendants from as far away as California and Florida made contributions toward the restoration of the stone. With cash and pledges, to date, we have \$1760 toward our 50/50 match of \$2,500.



Essex Junction Village Cemetery, 2015

In order to raise the rest of our local match, ECHS will be approaching the Sons of the American Revolution and the VFW. It is hoped that ECHS members might consider making a donation toward the restoration of the stone. Contributions of any amount are appreciated and can be sent to ECHS, PO Box 8388, Essex, VT 05451 (note on the check that the money is for the Stevens Gravestone Restoration Fund).

Abram's grave is part of the ECHS's Village Cemetery walking tours. Through these walking tours, the cemetery has become a community resource for teaching of history in our schools and for adults who enjoy history. When restored, Abram's gravestone will become a focal point at the start of the walking tour for the telling of stories about other Patriots, veterans, and Essex citizens – a focal point made possible by a community who treasures and honors their past.

If you have any questions, please contact Ann Gray at 802-878-4088.





The Essex Community Historical Society's 2015 Donors

Abram Steven's Gravestone Restoration Fund

Maureen Labenski
Tim Jerman
Dan Cole
Ann Gray
Mary Finn
R. Ryan Kunkel
Alan Finn
Nancy Lewis
Thomas Houghton
Jonathan Wood
Andreita Pullis
Deborah Finn
Carol Kunkel

2014 Annual Fund Donors

Founders' Circle

James Barrett
Bruce and Ruth Ann Beers
Malcolm Levanway *In memory of his parents*
Peg Hamlin
Alan Luzzatto
Nancy and John Bartlett
Patricia Bixby *In memory of Donald Earle Bixby, Jr*
4/29/21925 – 10/25/2012

Historians' Circle

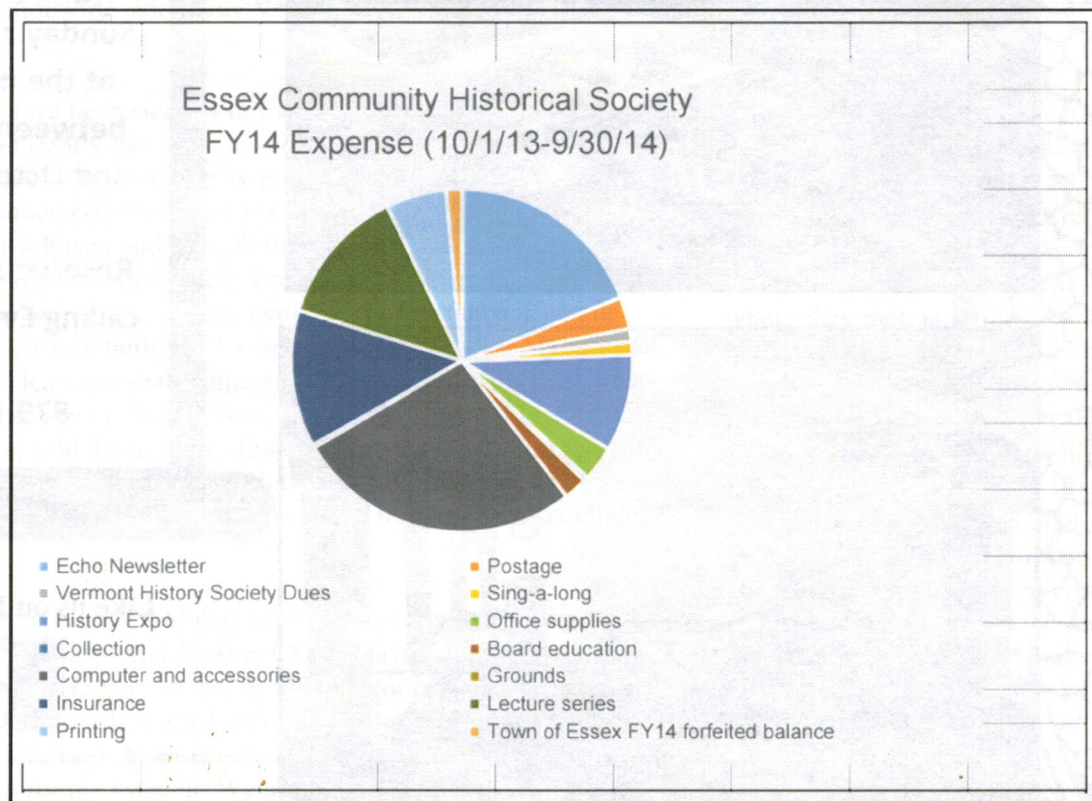
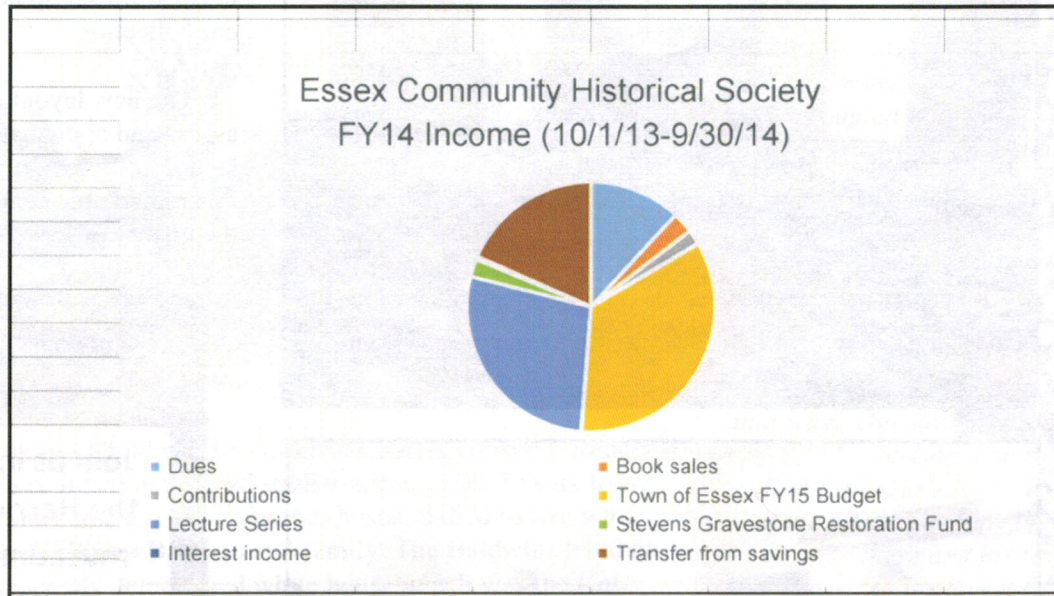
Harnish Family
Joyce Tubbs
Kathleen Linde
Robert Wood *In memory of his grandfather, George Beecher*
James Cutler
George 'Ron' Clapp Circle
Ellen and Thad Wolosinski
Art and Jan Kilmer *In memory of Ron Clapp*
Ann Gray
Dave and June Keenan *In memory of Ed and Ione Keenan*
William Parkinson
L. Royce Griffin
Max and Alison Levy *In honor of Town of Essex staff*

Harriet Powell Circle

Holly and Lynne Powell *In memory of Harriet Powell*



ECHS First Annual Financial Report



Another Exciting Project- The Harriet Powell Museum gets a Makeover



Members of the ECHS Board and other volunteers carried out a long planned project to rearrange exhibits in the museum. Over the course of a Saturday in April we set up new displays from our collection.

The new layout allows visitors to assess and appreciate more of our collection of Essex artifacts. Come view this remarkable change and appreciate the history of Essex!

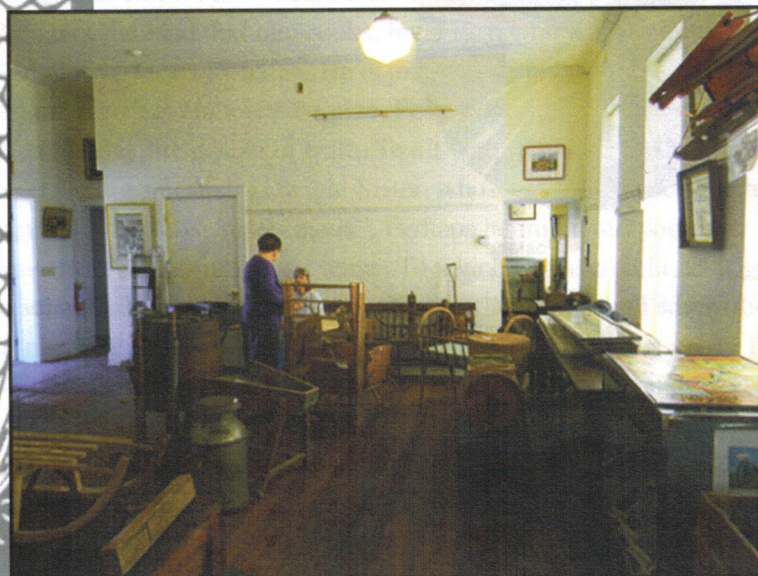


**Join us in keeping
the Harriet Powell
museum open to
visitors in 2015!**

**Sign up for one
Sunday afternoon
at the museum
between June 7th
and October 12th.**

**Reserve a date by
calling Eva Clough.**

879-0849



Members organizing and curating the museum, 2015

Like us on Facebook!



www.facebook.com/EssexCommunityHistoricalSoc





ECHS 2015 Board Members

Eva Clough, Co-President 802-879-0849

Paula DeMichele, Co-President

Thad Wolosinski, Vice President

Denise Groll, Secretary

Ann Gray, Treasurer

Tim Jerman

Jan Kilmer

Polly McEwing

essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net



Essex Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 8388 Essex, Vermont 05451

Membership Form

Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership at this time.
Or you can pass this on to someone who would like to become a member.

Dues will help us add to our collection of Essex memorabilia, maintain the museum,
publish the ECHO, and sponsor historical programs.

_____ New member

_____ Renewal of membership

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

____ Individual membership \$10.00

____ Family membership \$15.00

____ Senior membership (60 and over) \$5.00

____ Lifetime: individual, married, civil union \$100.00

Make checks payable to the
Essex Community Historical Society.
Thank You.





ESSEX, VT COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 8388

Essex, VT 05451



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MAY 13 2015
MAILED FROM ZIP CODE 05452

Ellen & Thad Wolosinski
36 Chelsea Rd
Essex Junction, VT 05452

11/15

JOIN US FOR OUR SECOND ANNUAL FAMILY DAY & MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH 1 - 4 PM

HARRIET FARMSWORTH POWELL MUSEUM LAWN
FACE PAINTING, CHECKERS, CAKE & ICE CREAM!

