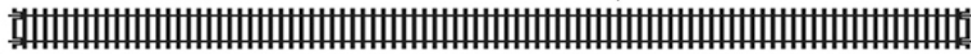




ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



President's Message

Last year we ended our twenty-fourth year as the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum and the Essex Community Historical Society. Plans are in the works for the upcoming twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. The Board is already making plans for new displays on Essex in the museum and an exciting series of public programs. Members will see details of the Anniversary Year celebrations in this newsletter.

The museum and collections has undergone a huge revamping this year. Sherry and Hubie Norton, Polly McEwing and several board members have worked hard on organizing our collection so that it is much more organized. Ann Gray has worked very hard to change displays around and has done a lot of research and is building new displays that will be ready when the museum opens. Look for a list of the new displays in this newsletter.

Laurie Jordan continues her support of the museum by giving school tours both in Essex Center and Essex Junction and a Senior Citizen tour and is now including presentations for the Cub Scouts. She gave tours to approximately 195 students and adults last year. We are happy to announce that we welcomed approximately 150 visitors to our museum; Harriet would be so pleased that her dream of educating more of our young people is growing.

Our Tales & Treasures of Essex public program series drew a total of around 200 people, with many of them attending for the first time. People who attended came from as far away as Barre, as well as from Burlington and South Burlington.

We are looking for new board members. Our board is decreasing and it is hard to find new people who are interested in learning more about our community and would like to help preserve our history and memorabilia. Please email me at essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net if you are interested. We meet the third Thursday of each month at the museum starting at 7:00 PM.

We ended the year with our Annual Essex Tree Lighting & Sing-Along on the Town Common. Families came back to the Essex Elementary School for refreshments. Cookies made and donated by the Essex Girl Scouts.

Eva Clough, President



The Newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex & Essex Junction, Vermont
P.O. Box 8388
Essex, VT 05451
Spring 2016

essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net

JOIN US!

For our 2016 opening at

Family Day
&
Museum Open House

Sunday, June 5th
1 – 4 p.m.
Outside on the Green
in Front of the Museum

Museum Tours

Face Painting

Games

Spinning, Weaving
& Rug Hooking
Demonstrations

Rides on the
Roaming Railroad!

Cake & Ice Cream
3:15 p.m.

Rain Location Memorial Hall



Tales & Treasures
Of Essex
2016 Sponsors

Major Sponsor:



Series Sponsors:

Fort Ethan Allen
Industrial Park
Full Circle Gardens
Of Essex

Program Sponsors:

Merchants Bank
Sweet Clover Market

In Kind Donors:

Sam's Scoop Shop
Phoenix Books



Harriet Farnsworth Powell's Legacy

Twenty-five Year Anniversary of the Museum

researched & written by Tim Jerman

2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Harriet Powell Museum at the former "Little White School" in Essex. Harriet did not live to see the opening in 1992, but it was the realization of her dream to pass on a love of Essex history to future generations. She was represented at the museum's opening by her sons Rollie Jr. and Holly.

The museum itself, situated in the heart of Essex Center, is symbolic of the importance education has played in our town history. A stone schoolhouse and blacksmith shop stood on this site from the 1830's. The current building was erected in the 1870's and functioned as a two-room elementary school into the 1970's. It is located a stone's throw from the site of the old Essex Classical Institute, which served as a beacon to those who wanted a high quality secondary experience for over 125 years. Now the museum houses an interesting collection of Essex artifacts, many of which were Harriet's gift after years of collecting local history. The museum has been recently revamped to highlight some new exhibits and rest a few "tired" ones. Stop by this summer if you haven't been in for a while.

Harriet also left a rich pictorial history of Essex, "Yesterday in Essex", published in 1977. It contains many old photos of both town and village in the late nineteenth century forward. But perhaps the best surviving glimpse of how she viewed Essex can be found in "Walking Tours of Essex Center, Vermont—A narrative by Harriet Powell". The tour is a reflection on her childhood in the Center. This is an example of her description of the old boarding house, which still stands at the bottom of Bixby Hill Road:

The boarding house was purchased by Essex Classical Institute Trustees (Harriet later was one) and the principal, the teachers, and the students lived in this boarding house. For example, my mother lived in the boarding house; my grandfather brought down a small stove, the wood necessary to put in the stove, her pots and pans, and every time she went home she brought back the necessary food. My aunt also lived there and they had a number of friends and it was very easy to swap your carrots or your turnips for your cabbage and they cooked their own meals at the boarding house. Living there, cooking there, studying there.

Harriet's reflections were not always 100% accurate. In describing the old store on the corner of Rt.15 next to the old cemetery, she says "If you look at this whole common, right straight across from the hotel, the current ballet school, that building was built by Mr. William Fletcher. His daughter is the one the Mary Fletcher Hospital is named after". Actually, William Fletcher was a butcher in Essex Junction; he is buried there and was the first village president in the 1890s. Mary's father was Thaddeus Fletcher, a wealthy businessman who did come



from humble beginnings in Essex Center. He and Mary, who never married, are both buried near Ethan Allen in Burlington.

Harriet's narrative runs eighteen pages. She ends with "*I know I've left out a great deal, but I hope this helps you some in your walk around Essex*". It certainly does, and the full manuscript is worth reading and is available at the museum during summer hours on Sundays and Thursdays.

In Harriet's genealogy file in the museum there is an even greater historical treasure. Harriet's uncle Theron Farnsworth compiled a family history written mostly by Harriet's paternal grandfather Joel W. Farnsworth (this was her other grandfather; the one mentioned above from the boarding house was her maternal grandfather). Joel, born in 1858, left a very detailed picture of life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was a pioneer of early telephone service and describes in detail how this area began to be tethered by "talking wires". He also wrote about his grandfather, also Joel Farnsworth, who was one of the first settlers of Westford. (continued on p.4)



(continued from page 3)

No wonder Harriet took such pride in our history! She directly descended from some of the region's first inhabitants. Here's a sample of family record:

"Record of Grandfather Joel Farnsworth, son of Ebenezer and Sarah Walker Farnsworth of Charlestown, N.H. came to Westford and bought land by deed dated March 14th, 1792 and signed by Noah Chittenden [one of Thomas Chittenden's sons], county clerk. Joel got a yoke of oxen cleared some land built a log house and the winter of 1792-3 he went to Charlestown (NH) with his oxen and sled. He married Sarah Wilson and taking with her what she had to bring on the sled, they came to Westford, 150 miles with an ox team through the woods by marked trees was their wedding trip."

Here is a description of early tax collections:

"Grandfather Joel was a collector of taxes in the second school district in Westford from 1796 to 1806. I see by the bills not one cent in money was mentioned on the bills but he was to collect the amount of grain named against each person on the list and take the same to the committee who should dispose of it to pay the expense of the school. And one year when they asked for a bid to build the fire for the winter term, the first bid was "I will build the fires if you will give me the ashes". One note among grandfather's papers was for seventeen cents to be paid one year from date and should be paid all in United States money."

Joel Farnsworth died in 1820 of smallpox he contracted from some Canadian travelers who stayed overnight. The Farnsworth history has other family recollections going back to the early 1700s. This narrative runs 27 pages and perhaps soon we will be able to present it and Harriet's online so readers may enjoy in their entirety. Harriet's grandfather Joel records his grand-daughters birth with these lines:

"My first son, Charles Wilson Farnsworth was born July 28th, 1897. He married Carrie Small. They had one girl born to them Harriet Elaine Small born November 23rd, 1929."

Joel W. died in 1942 at the age of 84 but kept up his writings almost to the end of his life.



So we at the Essex Community Historical Society say thank you and Happy Anniversary to Harriet Elaine Small Farnsworth Powell and the rest of her "historic" family for all they have given us to remember bygone days in Essex and Vermont!



Essex's Vietnam War Soldiers Who Made the Ultimate Sacrifice

By Ann Gray

As part of the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Vietnam War, the Essex Community Historical Society, in collaboration with the Green Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, are doing a tribute to the four Essex men who lost their lives in Vietnam. The soldiers were Bruce Baker, Stewart Lavigne, Bernard Ritchie, and Eugene Treadwell. This article is part of that tribute. Each of the four soldiers are profiled here.



PFC Bruce Baker

Bruce Baker was born on May 21, 1947 in Concord, New Hampshire, the son of Donald and Priscilla Baker. The Bakers later moved to Vermont and lived in Essex. As a teenager, Bruce earned the Boy Scout Order of the Arrow Award and served as a mentor to younger scouts. He attended Essex Junction High School from 1962-1964 and Hinckley (Maine) High School from 1964-1965.

Bruce enlisted in the Marine Corps on August 25, 1965, and after a month's training was sent to Okinawa. PFC Baker was a member of Lima Company, 3rd BN, 5th Marines (USMC) and on July 24, 1966, in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam, he sustained fragmentation wounds to the abdomen and chest while engaged in action against hostile forces. These injuries resulted in his death.

David Baker, Bruce's brother, was killed in an automobile accident in 1972. The two brothers are buried next to each other in Fairview Cemetery. Their father, Donald, a World War II veteran, is also buried in Fairview Cemetery. It is believed that Priscilla Baker moved to North or South Carolina where she died.

Bruce's parents were divorced. His father was remarried to Margaret Mulhorn Baker. After Donald Baker died, Peggy Baker also remarried. Her second husband, Norman Thompson, found Bruce's Purple Heart packed away and gave it to Purple Hearts Reunited. ECHS was honored to receive his Purple Heart in a return ceremony held last July (see Fall 2015 Echo).



Corporal Stewart Lavigne

Stewart Lavigne was born on December 4, 1950, the son of Leo and Katherine Day Lavigne. He lived in Indian Acres in Essex Junction and attended Hiawatha School and Essex Junction High School. He had five brothers and no sisters. The family loved the outdoors, whether it was hunting and fishing or hiking and camping. When the boys were as young as thirteen and fourteen, their father would drive them and their friends to a point on the Long Trail and drop them off. They would be on their own for week or so. One of the friends remembers they had a "ball exploring and learning how to survive in the mountains".

Stewie (as his classmates call him) was in the class of 1969 but he left school before graduation to enlist in the Army. He is remembered by classmates as a "happy go lucky guy – a profile for the freckled-faced kid – with a love for life".

From e-mails received from classmates, a picture of Stewie as somewhat of a prankster is gathered. He and a couple of buddies would go into empty classrooms and move stuff around and look into the teacher's desk. It is suspected by classmates that he was involved with the lobster in the science teacher's desk caper but not involved in the cat food sandwich caper. No further details were provided about the cat food sandwich caper but per- (continued p. 6)



(continued from p.5) haps further details are not wanted since Stewie worked at the Lincoln Inn!!

Stewie dreamed of flying and joining the Army and becoming an H-I door gunner/crew chief was a quick way to get into aviation. The first time, Stewie's helicopter was shot down he managed to get out and away from the scene before he realized the pilot was not with him. He went back and rescued the pilot. That night he was asked by someone who flew with him if he was going to fly again and he said "sure" and immediately was back into flying missions. The second time his helicopter was shot down on August, 19, 1969, he was killed along with seven others. This incident made the national headlines about a military mutiny, known as the Alpha Incident. On board were two high ranking officers, Lt. Col. Eli P. Howard Jr, Sgt. Maj. Franklin Rowell and an Associated Press photographer, Ollie Noonan.

Stewart Lavigne as a person seems best summed up in this email from Classmate Dave Adams: "Stew was a real hero. He joined the military at a time when that wasn't such a good idea, but was something he felt he needed to do. He was thinking of others, and not of himself. I think of Stew as a member of the class of 69 frequently, and the day we all found out his chopper went down. The fact that his memory lives on and even today has gotten so many of us to together via this e-mail string to spend a few minutes just to think of him, is an amazing tribute to Stew. We are all better off for having known him. Some core value that he instilled lives on in each of us. Even after all these years."

The Essex Community Historical Society is indebted to Glenn Rogers who saw our request for information on Front Porch Forum and contacted Judi Hagadorn Granucci who maintains a Class of '69 e-mail distribution list. We are also indebted to Judi for forwarding our request on to the Class of '69. And, a huge thank you is extended to those classmates who shared their memories of Stewie. These memories are printed verbatim in a notebook which will be permanently housed at the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum.



Lance Corporal Bernard Ritchie

(pictured lower left)

Bernard Ritchie was born on January 17, 1948, probably in Burlington, the son of Clarence and Barbara Martin Ritchie. He married Carol Ann Baxendale, the daughter of John and Mary Greenough Baxendale in Essex Junction on November 16, 1968. He enlisted in the US Marine Corps on July 10, 1968, in Albany, New York, and arrived in Vietnam on January 5, 1969, where he was assigned for duty with Company K, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st MARDIV (Rein) FMF.

During operation OKLAHOMA HILLS under the OPCON (Operational Control) of the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines the platoon was moving to the high ground of a ridgeline east of Hill 974 and engaged the North Vietnamese in a fire fight. The Marines maneuvered to envelop the enemy position and encountered additional enemy troops that joined in the battle. Continuing on the attack, the Marines assaulted the enemy positions until contact was broken and the North Vietnamese Army withdrew into the heavy jungle undergrowth. Three men died and four men were wounded during the confrontation with the enemy force, one of the casualties was LCpl Ritchie who was killed as a result of hostile rifle fire on April 29, 1969, in Quang Nam, Vietnam. He received a Purple Heart posthumously. He is buried in Fairview Cemetery.

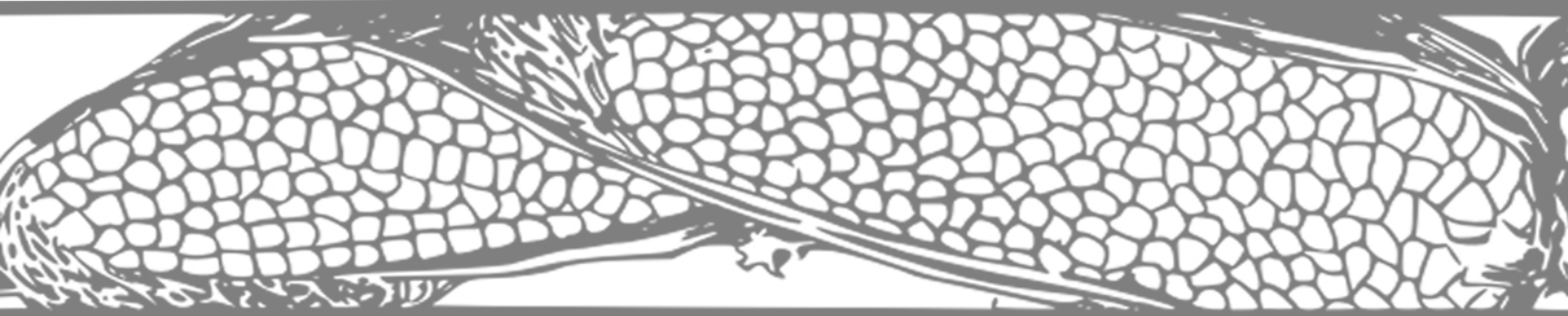
Bernard's parents were divorced and both remarried. His father died in 2003 and is buried in Middlebury. His mother died in 2009 and is buried in Fairview Cemetery. At the time of her death, she was using her maiden name, Barbara Martin. Her death record lists three surviving daughters. Nothing is known about what happened to Bernard's wife, Carol, after his death.

Eugene Treadwell was born on June 17, 1943. He was a sergeant in HHC, 2nd Battalion 12 Cavalry, 1 Cavalry Division and was living in Essex Center when he enlisted in the Army. He was killed in action on February 3, 1968 in Thua Thien-Hue Vietnam, and is buried in the Milford Cemetery in Milford, Maine. He was awarded a Purple Heart.

On January 11, 2001, his nephew, Hank Treadwell, posted on The Virtual Wall the following about the battle where Eugene lost his life:

One of the primary Viet Cong objectives in their 1968 TET offensive was the ancient Imperial capital, Hue City. The VC were very successful in infiltrating troops into the city and in capturing key points during the first two days of the offensive, but holding the city depended upon their ability to bring more troops and supplies into Hue. While the Army of Republic of Vietnam and US Marines were tasked (continued p. 7)





continued from p.6) with recapturing Hue, elements of the US Army's 1st Cavalry and 101st Airborne Divisions were charged with preventing enemy reinforcements from influencing the battle for Hue City.

The 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry was positioned as a blocking force in the vicinity of Thon La Chu, a hamlet four kilometers west-northwest of Hue. On February 3, 1968, the cavalymen engaged a North Vietnamese Army battalion moving toward Hue and fought them to a standstill in a battle that lasted most of the day. Nine US soldiers were killed in the fighting. Sgt. Eugene Treadwell was one of them.

February 4 was essentially a replay of the third. The enemy trying to go through or around the 2/12 Cavalry and the 2/12 Cavalry trying to prevent it. Neither side was entirely successful, and 12 more cavalymen were dead. The Commanding Officer, 2/12 Cavalry, realized that he could not remain where he was. The enemy strength was increasing while he had been advised that he could not expect reinforcements or even replacements for his dead and wounded. He decided on a truly audacious move – a night march on February 4 and 5 took the battalion through the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army forces to higher ground to the southwest -- Ground where a strong defensive position could be established and held and from which the valley below could be denied to the Viet Cong by direct and indirect fires. The tactic worked. The battalion maintained its new position without undue difficulty and enemy forces approaching Hue from the northwest were unable to either hold their positions or breach the cordon of fire. The remnants of two enemy regiments broke up into smaller elements and withdrew to the west.

Hank Treadwell's e-mail address is no longer valid and no additional information on Eugene is known.

Information Sources: Vietnam War websites; ancestry.com; e-mails from and interviews with individuals who remembered the soldiers

Thank you to the following for their generous donations:

**Abram Steven's Gravestone
Restoration Fund**

Green Mountain Chapter Daughters of
the American Revolution

2016 Annual Fund Donors

Lucille and Richard Allen

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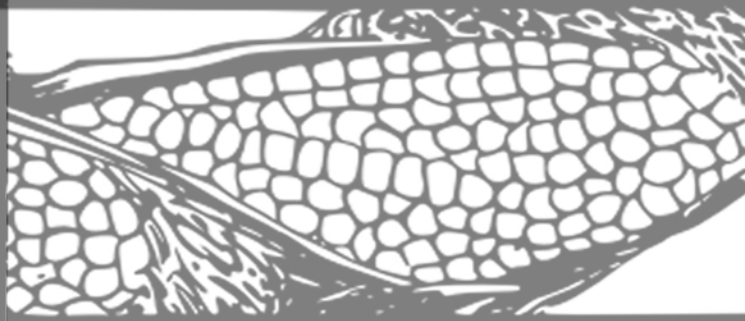
Dave and June Keenan In memory of

Ed and Ione Keenan

Malcolm Levanway In memory of his
parents

Alan Luzzatto

William Parkinson



Chittenden County Historical Society Seeks Applications for 2016 Research Grants

Are you doing original historical research about an aspect of Chittenden County history? Would you like to investigate a person, organization, place or event that was significant to the history of the county? Do you think something important to the county's history has been overlooked and deserves attention? There is a way to get some financial help to do this research.

The Chittenden County Historical Society announces its annual competition for research grants in 2016. Anyone, whether or not a member of the Society, may apply for a grant of from \$100 to \$1,000 for a research project on some aspect of Chittenden County history. Grants are made directly to individuals and do not require a sponsoring organization.

From its beginning, the Chittenden County Historical Society has chosen to focus its financial resources on aiding research and publication instead of owning and maintaining buildings and artifacts and duplicating what individual town historical societies do.

Past grants have supported new research on a wide area of subjects. Previous grantees have ranged from school children to college professors. The deadline for receipt of applications is June 15 and grants will be awarded at the Annual Meeting of the society on mid-July (date to be announced). Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the Chittenden County Historical Society website (<http://cchsvt.org/>); or by contacting Sylvia Bugbee, at the email below. Please send or email applications to Sylvia Bugbee, 213 Penny Lane, Shelburne, VT 05482; or email sylvia.bugbee@uvm.edu.



All New Exhibits for 2016 at the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum

For our 25th anniversary, all the exhibits at the Museum will focus on the last 25 years:

Essex Section – review Town history 1991-2015

Business and Industry Section – highlight several businesses that existed in 1991

Home and Farm Section – show operating farms in 1991 and housing developments built since 1991

Military Section – honor Essex men and women who served, 1991-2015

Harriet's Corner – detail history of the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum and Essex Community Historical Society

All exhibits will be interactive as visitors will be asked to share their memories. At the end of 2016, the memories will become part of a scrapbook to be kept at the Museum.





ECHS 2015 Board Members

Eva Clough, President 802-879-0849

Thad Wolosinski, Vice President

Jan Kilmer, Secretary

Ann Gray, Treasurer

Paula DeMichele

Alan Luzzatto

essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net

Please take a close look at your address label. The expiration date of your membership is noted. You can use the form below to update your membership!



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.**

Like us on Facebook!



www.facebook.com/EssexCommunityHistoricalSociety





ESSEX, VT COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 8388

Essex, VT 05451



**An Invitation To Our Members For Our
25th Anniversary**

Do you enjoy meeting new people?

Sharing your interest in the stories of Essex?

**Over 150 visitors toured the Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum in 2015
and we expect great interest in our new museum displays for 2016.**

**We invite our members to share their love of Essex history
by welcoming visitors during Sunday afternoon museum hours in 2016.**

**Sign up for one Sunday volunteer shift from 1 – 4 p.m.
in June, July, August or September.**

One brief orientation meeting will be held.

**To sign up call Ann Gray at 878-4088
or email grayann8@aol.com**