

ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE • FALL 2019

I would like to start by thanking all our sponsors: Major Sponsor is Vermont Federal Credit Union, our Series Sponsor is National Life Group and Northfield Saving Bank is our Program Sponsor. I also would like to thank the Town of Essex for their donation which is greatly appreciated. It helps with the publication of the ECHO, insurance on our collection and postage. We also would like to thank the local police department and local businesses for their support in helping us with our programs.

The Essex Community Historical Society celebrated its 28th year. We hosted several exciting programs starting with Brennan Gauthier talking about WWI with the emphasis on some Essex Soldiers. Our Open House had new exhibits on some of the individuals who helped shape Essex. For our last program we decided to do something different. We thought it would be nice to try out some recipes from the early years in history. Some were familiar but others we had not heard of.

I would like to thank some of our board members for all of their help. Unfortunately Justin St. James was not able to stay on the board due to a very busy work schedule. We said a sad goodbye to Denise Groll, she worked/is still working on our collection inputting information into the

database with the help of Jerry Fox. Denise has moved to Georgia and has a job as an intern as an archivist. This is what she went to college for and is very excited starting her new journey. We will also miss Alan Luzzatto, he has kept our gardens looking beautiful. He was also a part of the collections committee. Thank you, Alan, for all of your hard work.

Past presidents attending the annual meeting were, Jerry Fox, Dick Allen, and Ann Gray.

We are still trying to earn money for the repairs that need to be done on the water tower. If you know of any grants or people willing to donate money towards the repairs, please contact Ann Gray or myself. The Water Tower is a very important part of our history, it was the first building built at Fort Ethan Allen in 1893. We need to help preserve this tower.

We are also in need of new board members. We meet on the third Thursday of each month except December. We have our sing-a-long on the first Friday of the month. This year it is December 6, 2019 starting at the Elementary School at 6:15 PM.

Eva C. Clough, President



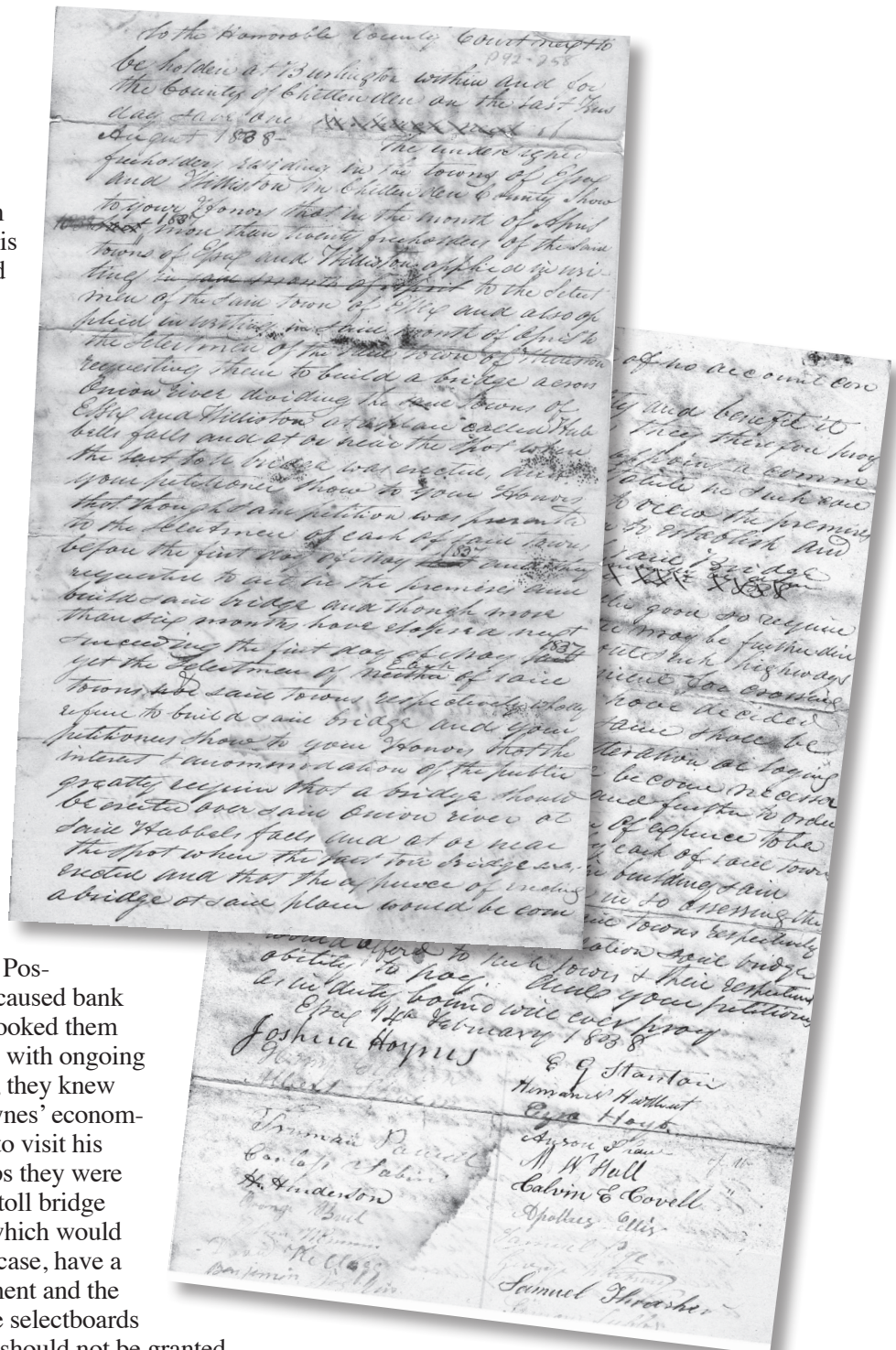
The Newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont

P.O.Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451
essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.net

MORE ON BRIDGES....

Our recent article on the mixed history of the bridges over the Winooski River at Hubbell's Falls between Essex Junction and Williston was missing an interesting find which turned up in our museum archives after we published. It is an original court document filed by local businessman Joshua Haynes in 1837 to force the selectboards of Essex and Williston to build a bridge to replace the ferry, which had operated since the freshet of 1830 had wiped out the old bridge.

The document is significant for a couple of reasons. It was co-signed by many of the leading citizens of both towns whose names are recognizable to students of local history: Albert Stevens, Orange Buel, David Kellogg, Samuel Page, Simon Tubbs, E.G. Stanton, Ralph Rice, Ezra Slater, David Day, Samuel Griffin, Giles Chittenden, Calvin Morse, and Daniel Tyler to name a few. With all this support, it begs speculation on why the boards were not interested. Possibly the Panic of 1837, which caused bank closures around the country, spooked them about engaging a public project with ongoing maintenance at that time. Also, they knew the bridge was primarily in Haynes' economic interest to support crossings to visit his carding mill at the Falls; perhaps they were holding out for another private toll bridge like the 1825 Johnson bridge, which would save taxpayer expense. In any case, have a look at this hand-written document and the court response, which asked the selectboards to show cause why the petition should not be granted. More research will be needed to find the exact disposition of the lawsuit. Transcribing old documents can be a challenge...Haynes did not have the best penmanship in Essex!



ESSEX COMMON BURIAL GROUND GETS A MAKEOVER!

Thanks to old friends of the cemetery, work is in progress to clean and repair all the stones in the cemetery. This is a great project, and thanks are due to the following: Graeme Freeman and the Freeman Foundation, who contributed through the Vermont Preservation Trust to provide private funding. Freeman ancestors are buried near the back of the cemetery and the family has generously given to support maintenance of the grounds through the years. Also Bianchi Stone Crafters has been doing the fine restoration work. Thanks also to the Town of Essex and Cemetery Commission, chaired by Fran Kinghorn, with Elaine Strunk, Susan Brown, Joan Janzen, and Marcus Wilson, who have overseen the project. Included here are examples of stones that were recently rescued from overgrowth and restored from the Griffin family discussed in the previous article.



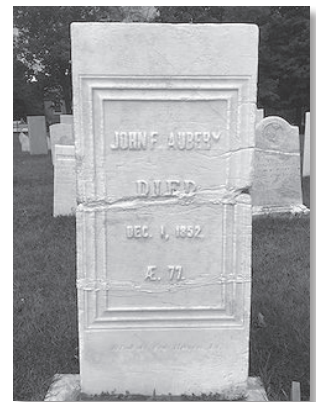
For Essex residents, if you haven't visited, the burial ground right across from the Essex Free Library and Harriet Powell Museum is a great way to get a nice walk and clearly see and read the grave-stones of the former residents who made this community what it is today. Worth a look!



Here is one of many stories which illustrate why this work is important. One of the badly damaged stones lying on the ground memorialized John F. Aubery, born in 1775. His stone was in 3 pieces. It lay not far from his mother's grave...Sarah Castle, second wife of Abel Castle, an important figure in Essex history. Sarah had been married to Fredrick Aubery, John's father. In February, 1778, Fredrick gave Sarah full power of attorney

and disappeared from Vermont for thirteen years! Rumor had it he had been killed by Native Americans in some skirmish farther west. But in 1791 he returned and demanded of Abel that he relinquish Sarah as his lawful wife. Abel's response was recorded.. "You have no just claim on my wife Sarah and I cannot allow you to interfere with my wife and family. You left Sarah, your former wife, in the year 1778, and have not been heard from until now, when you make this unlawful demand on me for my wife Sarah in 1791. And further, Sarah Castle, my present wife, will remain with me as her lawful husband until death doth part us".

Fredrick Aubery wisely backed off, and acknowledged that it was Sarah's wish to remain with Abel. This story comes down to us from two family histories.* Fredrick, who was a surgeon in the British army in the French and Indian War, claimed to have dressed General Wolfe's mortal wounds in the battle of Quebec in 1759. Rebuffed in Essex, he moved to Bradford and was one of the earliest settlers there. John F. Aubery remained in Essex and served in numerous civic capacities. He died in New Haven, Vermont in 1852 but is buried here with two wives and a son. Sadly, his mother Sarah died shortly after the husband-returns incident and Abel Castle is also flanked by two of his three wives. When Abel died at age 95, he had 95 living children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren! We celebrate having John Aubery's stone restored and standing once again..we think Sarah and Abel would approve too!



*A History of the castle Family: From 1635 to 1900, William Wallace Ingraham, 1905

(Ingraham was Abel Castle's grandson and grew up in the family homestead on Weed Road)

FROM KILLINGWORTH TO KANSAS, BY WAY OF ESSEX VERMONT!

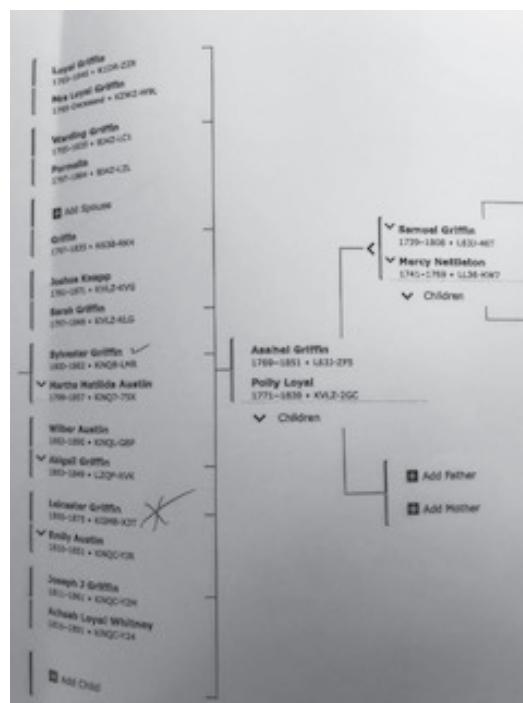
TIM JERMAN, ECHS

On occasion, a visitor to Vermont and ECHS looking for ancestors turns up an interesting story of Essex early history. So it was recently when Kenyon Griffin of Hays, Kansas, stopped in looking for information on his 5-G grandfather, Samuel Griffin.

We knew that Samuel Griffin (1739-1808) was an early Essex landowner, buried in the cemetery across the street from the Powell museum. He is mentioned by town historian LC Butler as living in a house near what is now Indian Brook reservoir, with a foundation to a house still visible in the 1880's. Our recent attempts to find it have not been successful. Griffin owned two parcels of land on the 1807 map of Essex. One of his parcels borders land owned by John Knickerbacor, who lived to be 100 and was Ira Allen's personal secretary for years, involved in all his land dealings. He would have been an interesting neighbor to know! Samuel originally came from Killingworth Connecticut, the same town that Essex founding father Abram Stevens hailed from. Samuel's third wife Mercy Steevens Bailey may have been an Abram relative, but was not a sister. Unusual for early settlers, Samuel moved to Vermont later in life, at age 56, and lived in Essex about 12 years before his death. Because his sons already had moved to New Haven, Vermont, it's not entirely clear why he chose Essex, but it may be reasonable to speculate that land prices were favorable or he had local connections with friends from Connecticut.



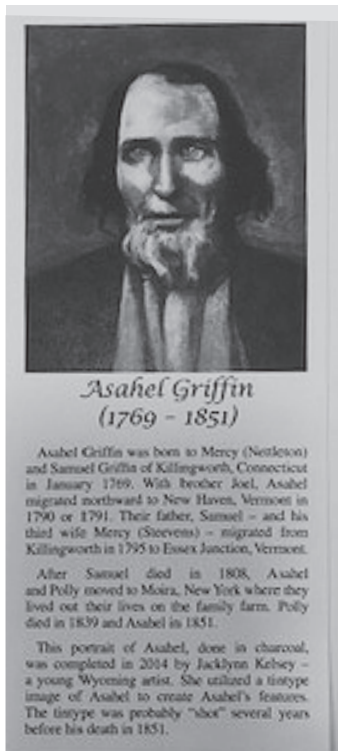
1807 map of Essex



Family Tree

Our visitor Ken Griffin is descended from Samuel's son (from his first marriage) Asahel Griffin (1769-1851). Asahel (pronounced A-shell) and his brother Joel moved north from Connecticut before their father and stepmother, to New Haven in Addison county in 1790 or 1791. Then, in 1808, Samuel died in Essex. Asahel and his wife Polly Loyal Griffin then moved across the lake to Moira, New York, west of Plattsburgh, and farmed there until Polly died in 1839 and Asahel in 1851.

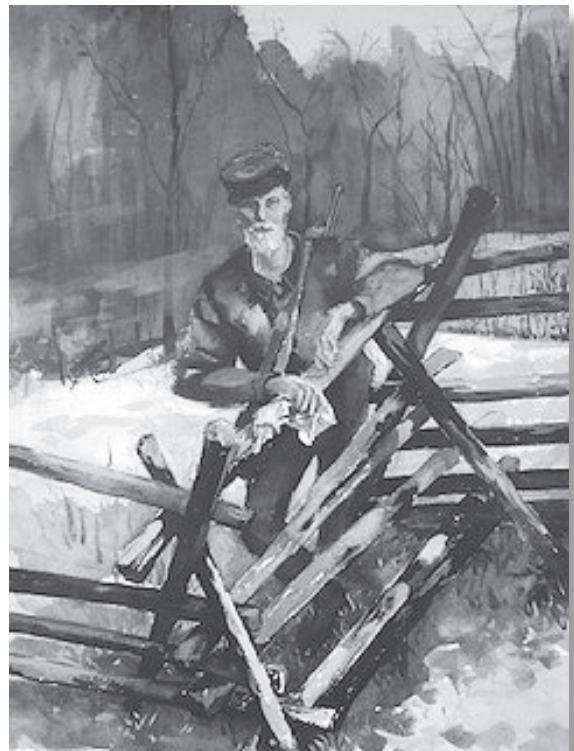
Fortunately for the descendants, Asahel had a tin-type image made that was handed down through the



Asahel Griffin illustration

family. An artist, Jacklynn Kelsey, was able to make a charcoal drawing from a faded photo of the tintype which likely dated from the late 1840's.

Asahel and Polly Griffin had six children who migrated to Moira, New York with them. One of the middle children was Sylvester Griffin, who has a fascinating Civil War story that won't be read in any Vermont histories. Born in 1800 in New Haven, Vermont, Sylvester wouldn't let his age get in the way of service to his country. At age 47, but recorded as 34, he and two of his sons served in the War with Mexico. Perhaps he looked young enough to lie about his age. Then living in Iowa, he couldn't again resist the call to arms when war broke out between North and South in 1861; he enlisted in the Union Army in Dubuque at age 61! His age is not recorded in Iowa regimental



Civil War likeness of Sylvester Griffin

records. The Iowa twelfth Infantry trained in St. Louis and saw action in 1862 at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Sylvester was wounded at the massive Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee late in the action on Sunday, April 6, 1862. He died on a hospital ship from his gunshot wounds on May 24. Thus, Sylvester became one of the oldest, if not the oldest Union soldier killed in combat during the Civil War!

The Griffins have a long and colorful family history in common with others whose families branched out from New England to live and work in many other states. Google "Samuel Griffin Genealogy blog" for much more interesting detail of this great American family. We are grateful to have learned wonderful details of another "story" from our burial ground which can be shared with our local community. Thank you Kenyon Griffin!



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
October 2018- September 2019

REVENUE

Dues	415.00
Book sales	170.00
Contributions	176.00
Town of Essex FY19 Budget	3,000.00
Tales and Treasures	500.00
Interest income	37.92
Deaccession	0.00
Water Tower	342.09
Hannafords Bags	63.00
Shaws Bags	24.00
Sale of T-shirt	5.00

TOTAL REVENUE 4,733.01

EXPENSE

Echo Newsletter	512.25
Postage/PO Box	315.50
Vermont Historical Society Dues	50.00
Stevens Gravestone Restoration Fund	411.56
Web page	80.70
Sing-a-long	129.73
Office supplies	157.61
Collection	104.80
Insurance	654.00
Tales and Treasures	150.00
Garden	39.01
Printer	215.98
Security camera	86.00

TOTAL EXPENSES 2,907.14

ACCOUNT BALANCES 9/30/18

General Accounts	
Checking	2,890.32
Savings	654.48

RESTRICTED ACCOUNTS

CD -- TD Bank (separate account)	4,733.00
Tales and Treasures (checking)	1,138.54
Echo (checking)	850.00
Collection insurance (checking)	700.00
Postage (checking)	134.00
1805 Schoolhouse Fund (savings)	577.00
Deaccession Fund (savings)	813.75
Water Tower (separate account)	19,819.31

TOTAL CASH ON HAND 32310.40

WHAT DOES ECHO STAND FOR?

Twice a year the Echo arrives in your mailbox. Do you know what Echo stands for? E-mail your answer to essexcommunityhistoricalsociety@myfairpoint.org by January 1, 2020. A \$10 Dunkin gift card will be mailed to the person who has the correct answer. If more than one person is correct, all their names will be placed in a hat and a winner drawn. If no one has the correct answer, a winner will be drawn from all who responded with an answer. For those members who have been around since the beginning, this will be a test of your memory and, hopefully, a walk down memory lane. If you remember the discussion about what to name the ECHS newsletter, we would love to hear about it – so send your memories of those discussions along with your answer. The correct answer (and maybe some of the other guesses) and the winner's name will be published in the Spring 2019 Echo.

THANK YOU TO THE 2019 TALES AND TREASURES SPONSORS

MAJOR SPONSOR



SERIES SPONSOR



PROGRAM SPONSOR



**Thank you for your donation
to the Fort Ethan Allen
Water Tower Restoration****

Will Parkinson

**Donations received April 1, 2019
to October 1, 2019

ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020

President: Eva Clough (2017-2020)

Vice President: Tim Jerman (2017-2020)

Secretary: Jan Kilmer (2017-2020)

Treasurer: Ann Gray (2017-2020)

Jerry Fox (2017-2020)

Dylan Giambastista (2017-2020)

Thad Wolosinski (2018-2021)

Please take a 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.**

**Your 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 _____ Email _____

___ 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 COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O.Box 8388

Essex, Vermont 05451



Essex Community Historical Society
Presents

The Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Sing-a-Long

Friday, December 6th at Essex Elementary School

6:15 pm

Join us for the tree lighting, sing-a-long, and cookies afterwards!