

# BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

May 2014

Issue No. Five

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### PROGRAMS

John Atwood  
**The Reed Organ & 19th  
Century VT Music**

Bridgewater Grange  
June 3, 2014  
7 pm

**VT History Society  
History Expo  
Theme Artist and Artisans:  
Vermont's Creative Heritage**

Tunbridge Fairground  
June 21/22

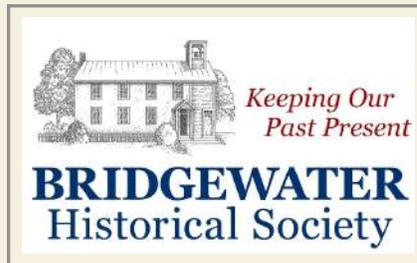
**Booth at  
North Branch Bluegrass Festival**  
August 30/31

#### OFFICERS

President: Polly Timken  
Vice President: Jeannette Sawyer  
Secretary: Sondra Stevens  
Treasurer: Sue Kancir  
Membership: Alice Paglia  
Curator: Polly Timken

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susanne Weldon  
Phoebe Standish  
Bruce Maxham  
Lauren Jane Wilder  
John Atwood  
Olive Greenough  
Nancy Kendall  
Bill Hoyt



#### Monthly meetings

held Last Tuesday  
of each month at  
6:30 p.m.  
Old Brick School House  
12 North Bridgewater Road



Ben Needham, Gib and Warren Blanchard

## News and Notes from the Brick Schoolhouse

By Polly Timken

As your new President, I would like to report on the first few months of 2014. The Bridgewater Historical Society has been busy. In February, the Town loaned us many items that were in the Southgate House. Due to the restoration work going on there, it was felt that the items would be safer at the Brick Schoolhouse. Amongst the items are a collection of books, maps, paintings, and furniture. We hope to use the items for exhibits and research.

April brought Judith Edwards speaking on the Civilian Conservation Corps presence in Vermont, most notably in Plymouth. We had a sellout attendance which was a great way to start the season.

May brings the opening for the season with our new exhibit dedicated to the Bridgewater veterans of the armed forces.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, John Atwood will give a presentation on reed organs of Vermont. He will provide a history of the reed organ and play music from the late 1800's.

We are preparing for the Vermont History Expo at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds in June. This will be the second appearance for the Society and our exhibit will be on the Woolen Mill.

I look forward to seeing all of our members this season. We'd love to hear from you as the Society belongs to the members and we value your thoughts.

## Civilian Conservation Corps Presentation

On April 22, Judy Edwards spoke to a full house on the Civilian Conservation Corps. Her engaging style brought many questions and stories from our members. In addition to performing her 'day job' as a psychologist, she has written many historical novels including a trilogy for young adults that take place on Mt. Ascutney involving the Depression and the CCC. This caused her to do research on the creation of the CCC and the camps in Vermont. For more information on her books and research you can go to [www.Judithedwards.com](http://www.Judithedwards.com).



Rick White, of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreations, supplied this vintage photograph of two CCC men at the group's Camp Coolidge, which was located at the Calvin Coolidge State Forest. The camp was the third CCC camp established in Vermont, on June 9, 1933. It is featured in Judith Edwards' new book, 'At the Top of the Mountain.' / Courtesy photo

## Ruth Needham and the CCC Dog

**Ruth and Tammy**  
**By Royal Houghton**

Nov 4 2013

I read on your Bridgewater Historical Society about the upcoming program on the CCC. I might have something of interest to add involving Ruth Houghton Needham.



One of the camp's top officers lived in Bridgewater Corners by the name of Achenbach with his wife and her brother. Also a member of the family was a white German Shepard dog that he brought from Germany and was his constant companion. The dog was noted for carrying his master's lunch basket up the mountain while working with the boys. We became acquainted with the family due to stopping and playing with the dog as we passed by. She bonded with Ruth completely. Whenever they would go away for a weekend Ruth was asked to take care of her. Sometime later Mr. Achenbach was transferred and he asked us to keep the dog. I have a picture of us with the dog Tammy. I'm sure Ruth would have had a lot of good stories to tell about Tammy.

## Staying Current

Polly Timken, Jeannette Sawyer and Audrey Putnam attended the Exhibit Workshop, produced by the Vermont Historical Society and hosted by the Woodstock History Center. This all day workshop covered such topics as exhibit content, design and construction.

Following lunch and a tour of the Dana House, the discussion turned to keeping the collections safe, and community outreach for general programming and the History Expo.

The seminar was very helpful not only for our participation at the History Expo event, but also for the everyday running of BHS. We hope to continue to incorporate the standard museum practices in areas such as preservation of artifacts, education and community outreach into our own agenda

## Membership

Membership is going strong. We have 103 families from 12 states. This year 11 new families have joined our passion for Bridgewater History. Your support allows us to continue our programs, exhibits and maintain our collections and our historic school house. Remember it is not too late to renew your 2104 membership.



# Is there History Hiding in the Bridgewater Hotel Registers?

Compiled by Jeannette Sawyer

Recently the Bridgewater Historical Society has gratefully received items that the Woodstock Historical Society has de-accessioned from their collection. Among these items were three registers labeled "Bridgewater Hotel". While looking through these ledgers, dated from 1877 to 1908, many questions came to mind. Who were the owners and why did so many people from nearby towns stay here? Where was this building located? The book "Bridgewater, Vermont 1779-1976" by Gladys S. Adams has been a valuable resource from which the following has been taken:

In the early times a person's dwelling house served as an inn. The owner would furnish meals and lodging to the traveler and his horse. In 1834 John Woodward, was the first landlord of what was referred to as a public house, then as an inn and later as a tavern stand or hotel. In an article in the Standard in 1892 "Bridgewater 50 Years Ago" describes the Woodward's Hotel where, we regret to say, the idlers of the Village congregated on rainy days and where midnight suppers were held."

Many events were held at this hotel and it is recorded that on June 17, 1847 the Democrats of Bridgewater met here to elect a convention delegate. Democratic Levees were held here annually and such as the one that was held on Jan 8, 1855, tickets \$3.00. (See photo of the ticket donated by Edith Blanchard Osmer).

In 1854 John Woodward offered for sale -"The old established Tavern Stand in Bridgewater, the well-known Woodward's Hotel, together with a good garden and orchard. The above house and out buildings are in good repair."

In 1857 the Hotel was sold and from 1858 to 1860 Samuel Dunbar and Columbus Carpenter owned the business. From 1860 to 1881 Columbus Carpenter was the sole proprietor. And during this time many social events were held here. The 8th of January the Jackson Ball, commemorating Andrew Jackson's victory over the British at New Orleans in 1815, continued to be held annually. In 1869 one hundred and twenty five couples attended this event.

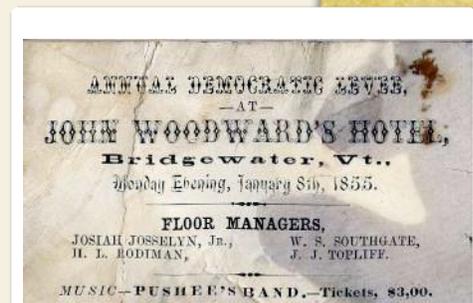
In the Standard Feb 10, 1881, "The Village of Bridgewater suffered a very heavy loss from a fire Friday night. About one AM the fire took in the rear part of Carpenter's Hotel and made such progress when discovered that very little of the furniture was saved. The fire swept through it with rapidity and some of the inmates saved themselves

with scarcely more than their night clothes. Miss Anna Murray fled from the burning building in her bare feet. The livery stables attached to the house were also consumed and with them a colt, a heifer and two or three pigs. Standing very near the stables on the west was an old church, a long time land mark in the Village. The fire made very short work of this also but was stayed from the house of Nathan Lamb on the westward side by the directed efforts of the citizens who secured quantities of water melted from the snow on the roofs." Columbus. B. Carpenter's loss was estimated at \$4,000./\$5,000." In May 1881 he re-built a new barn on site, but for a number of years the hotel was unused.

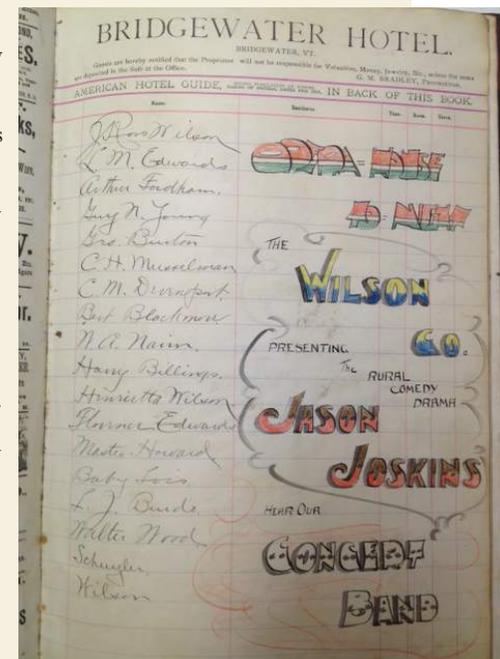
In 1893 Calvin Carpenter, son of Columbus, fixed up this house to supply good rooms and a first class table. There was a formal opening of Carpenter's Hotel on Nov 3 with a supper and dance. An early supper was served to those who did not wish to attend the dance at Union Hall. Calvin Carpenter died 1895 and in Jan 1896 Mrs. Jennie Carpenter, widow of Calvin, advertised for sale: The livery property of C. W. Carpenter of Bridgewater consisting of five complete rigs, horses, four top carriages, two open buggies, one two seated surrey for one or two horses, five single sleighs, old Comforts and Portlands, one double sleigh, harnesses, blankets, halters, surcingles, whips, bells and everything complete to run a first class livery stable. Horses are in first class condition and carriages and sleighs are almost new and all newly painted. The stable and house can be rented on very reasonable terms.

George Bradley took over the operation of the hotel in 1896 and in 1899 he remodeled the building to accommodate summer boarders. In June 1899 an interesting reception was held for W. F. Taylor who had terminated his employment as boss of the woolen mill weave room. On Saturday afternoon sixteen Bridgewater citizens mounted on horseback, led the band in uniform through the streets to the hotel where Mr. Taylor boarded. A large crowd gathered and Mr. Taylor was presented with a gold watch and chain. The band played, songs were sung and everyone enjoyed cake and ice cream.

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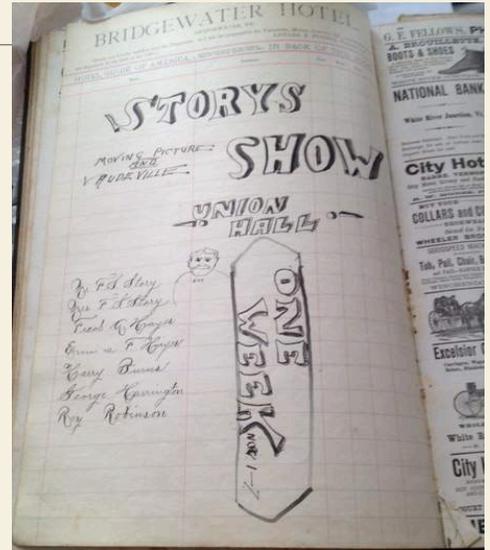


Democratic Levees, January 8, 1855



Jan 28, 1904

# Bridgewater Hotel Registers



Nov 1, 1905

continued from page 4

Ellen (Hadley) Furber acquired the place in 1903 and her husband, Luther Furber, ran the business until Dec 1907 when L. A. Barrows leased it for three years.

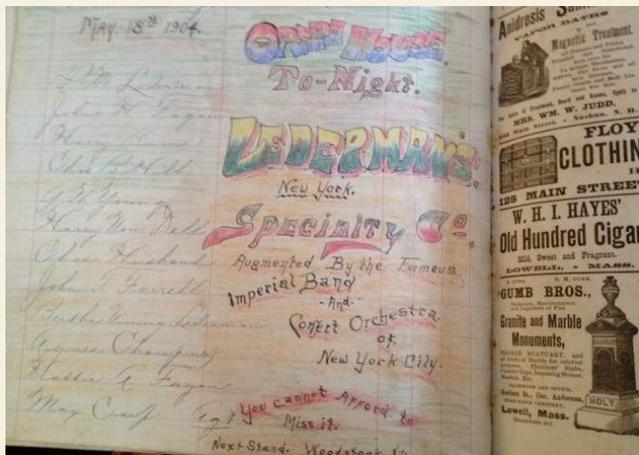
In April 1909 H. M. Stevens bought the hotel and it operated as Stevens and Farnsworth until 1919 when it became the possession of the Bridgewater Woolen Company.

On Saturday Oct 4 1919 Bridgewater held a "Welcome Home" celebration for the World War I soldiers. A parade was formed at the Young Men's Social Club house and consisted of the band and the soldiers who marched to the hotel and then to the ball

field. There was a ball game between Bridgewater and Hartland, followed by races, games and a tug-of-war. An oyster supper was served from five to eight thirty PM at the hotel to about five hundred people. The Woolen Company ran two movie shows at the Union Hall to accommodate those who could not be served at the first table and the second for those who were. Later there was dancing and then a third movie show for waitresses and workers who had been unable to see the other two. The speaker of the day was Rev. R. W. Barstow of Woodstock whose subject was "True Democracy Altogether."

During the Woolen Mill's ownership the hotel was remodeled into apartments which provided living quarters for mill employees. In 1972 the "Hotel Block" was sold to Edmund and Norma Sawyer, and resold in 1977 to the Everett Olmstead family who still own the property.

Over the years this wonderful building located in the Village, #7093 has lived a life of its own. People from near and far, from all walks of life, ball players to musicians, signed into this hotel as shown by these wonderful registers which let us glimpse into another important piece of Bridgewater's history.



May 18, 1904



# Come Visit



The Brick School House will be open **Saturdays** from May 24 to October 11, 10 am to 2pm.

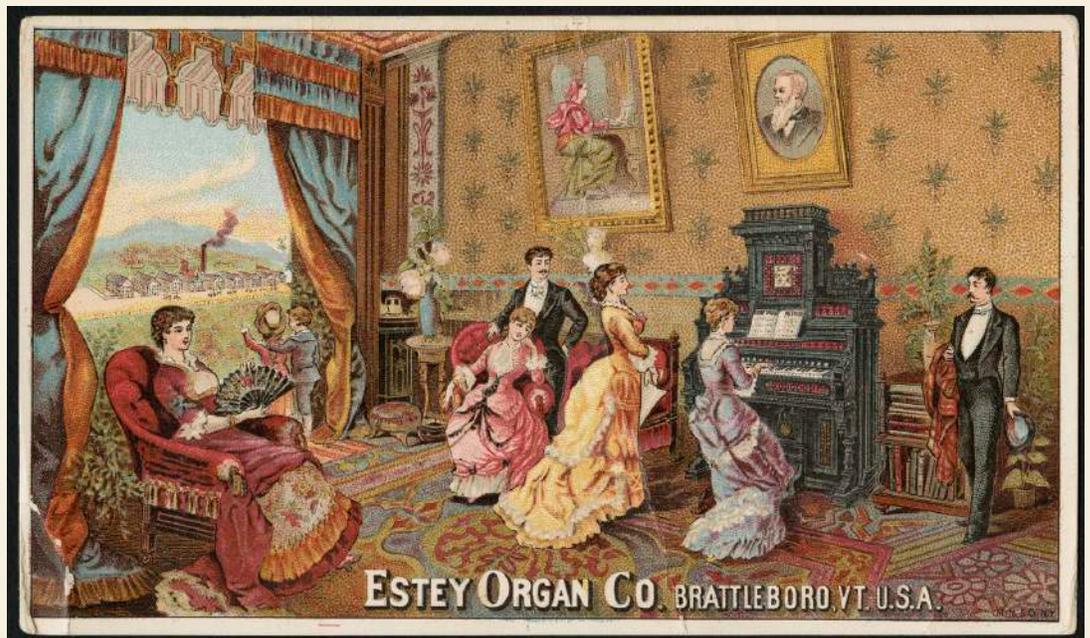
Bridgewater Village School  
1954



## The Victorian Reed Organ in rural Vermont

Neither radio nor television was yet developed; sound recording was in its infancy. Entertainment was generated from within tightly-knit communities. Music of the countryside was simple featuring hymns, patriotic songs, and marches. The reed organ was focus to home entertainment, rendered accompaniment for songs in public buildings, and provided an economical instrument for playing transcribed classical works otherwise inaccessible to rural Americans. Through a **narrated demonstration, John Atwood** explores music played on this once popular instrument with examples selected from period scores and featured on a parlor organ typical of Vermont homes, schools, and churches.

**June 3rd**  
**7 pm**  
**Bridgewater Grange**  
**100A**



# Volunteers Needed

Do you have four hours you can spare this summer? Would you like to at help at the schoolhouse on a Saturday and welcome visitors? We have projects such as cataloging the collection or you can do your own reading/ research.

Let us know if you or anyone else is interested in helping out the Bridgewater Historical Society.

Call or email me,  
Polly Timken  
457 4611  
timkenp@msn.com

## Bridgewater Woolen Mill: The Fabric of a Community



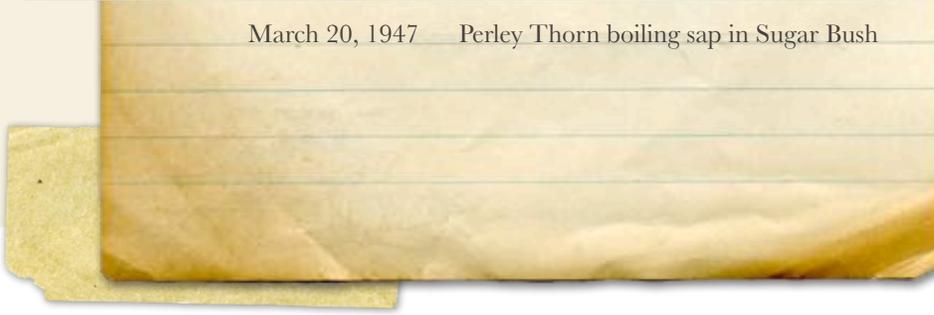
*(Photo Courtesy Lindy Kelly)*  
WALTER STEVENS with his team at the Woodstock Railroad Station with a load destined for the Bridgewater Woolen Mill.



See our exhibit at the  
Vermont Historical Society  
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March 20, 1947 — Perley Thorn boiling sap in Sugar Bush



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