

BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

November 2017

Issue No. Twelve



cica. 1911

Monthly meetings

held last Tuesday
of each month at 6:30 p.m.
Old Brick School House
12 North Bridgewater Road
Bridgewater, VT 05035
www.bridgewaterhistory.org

Old Brick School will be open every Saturday

10am to 2pm
Memorial to Columbus Day

PROGRAMS

Sunday June 10th, 2018 2:00PM

Thomas Giffin, President of the Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA) will talk about services that they offer to towns to assist with the maintenance of cemeteries. For more information the VOCA website is; www.voca58.org

Date to be announced

John Atwood will be sharing his knowledge on the history of the North Bridgewater cemetery, hopefully on site. More details when the date is set.

Program Committee is working on additional events. Always looking for good topic, just send us an email with your ideas or know of good speakers.

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

Alice Paglia
Audrey Putnam
Althea Derstine
Nancy Kendall
Bob Kancir
Bruce Maxham
Ernest Kendall
Laura Robinson



Bridgewater Corners School
Teacher Pearl Townsend

1931-32

Letter From the President

By Polly Timken

The Bridgewater Historical Society is proud to be able to continue to provide the Town of Bridgewater with a welcoming and secure place for historical records and heirlooms, as well as continuing our excellent programs.

A new permanent exhibit was installed. "DeAlgeroy Thompson and the Sharpshooters from Bridgewater" was created with research done by Jeannette Sawyer and the very generous donation from the Thompson family of the Sharp's Rifle. Accompanying the exhibit was a talk given by Howard Coffin on "Vermont Sharpshooters and the Civil War", sponsored by The Vermont Humanities Council. The standing room only event was covered by the VT Standard, the Valley News and Public Access Channel 8.

BHS members, Bob and Sue Kancir worked on the Topliff Cemetery. They updated the cemetery map, took photos of new stones, and entered all of the information onto our website database. The information was shared with the town office. The Kellogg Cemetery was cleared of brush and debris by members Sondra Stevens and Greg Robinson.

BHS was able to be open 22 Saturdays this summer, thanks to a core of devoted workers.

Membership continues to be very strong, with 107 families representing 15 states and Canada. Bridgewater Corners leads the count with 21 families.

BHS welcomed Jeff Leich, of the New England Ski Museum, to talk on "Tales of the 10th - The Mountain Troops and American Skiing." One visitor brought a pair of skis to show the audience. It was a bittersweet moment, honoring native Bridgewater citizen, Wendall Cram, of the 1940 US Olympic Ski Team fame, who passed away in June.



The bi-annual newsletter was published and a Christmas Gift Calendar created.

Maintenance included new porch steps and a freshly painted roof. An alarm system was added. Dehumidifiers were added to the vault to improve climate control.

BHS hosted a table at the Bridgewater town-wide Celebration with "Name That Face", a project set up for people to record who they recognized in our collection of school photos. BHS Facebook page continues to be used to add names to our school photos.

The Annual Meeting was hosted on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2017, with Linda Radtke presenting "The Vermont Civil War Songbook", the Vermont Humanities Council sponsored the event.

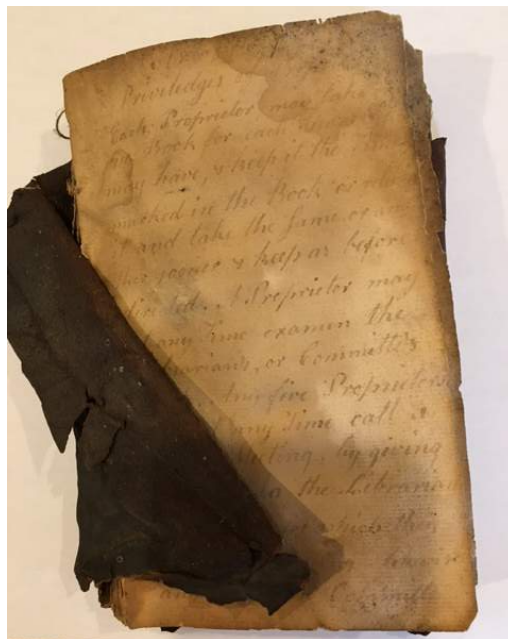
We hope that by providing a safe place for artifacts, as well as programs for the public, we can continue to provide the Town of Bridgewater with fun and meaningful events. None of this would be possible without your support.

The Bridgewater Library Society

By Polly Timken

The Historical Society has been given a very interesting record book containing the records of the establishment of the first library in Bridgewater. Lisa Olmstead came across this small notebook and we are fortunate that she has given it to us. The book offers a very detailed glimpse into how important it was for a library to be established in the town.

The earliest date recorded in this book, 1801, shows the establishment of the Bridgewater Library Society, with members paying to be a "Proprietor". This occurred around the same time as other "Social" libraries were founded throughout the State. The location of the library is unknown, but many were located in the homes of prominent citizens. There are many listed rules and regulations such as how long one could take a book for, and a listing of fines for any damages or loss to the book. Borrowers were fined for mistreatment of books. One dollar for lending a book out of his house, two cents for folding down the corner of the page, and three cents for each grease spot. The original Proprietor's By-Laws aren't very different from those initiated by the public libraries that evolved in the 1850's.



Bridgewater Library record book 1801

Also included are rules that the Proprietors could resort to for supervision of the Librarian. The Committee was to meet once a year before the annual Town Meeting to create a report on what "moneys" were due and the state of the condition of the books.

Some of the books available were: "Josephus' Jewish Antiquities", "Robertson's History of America", "Salem Witchcraft". "Female Reviews", "Franklin's Work", "Morse's Universal Geography", "Constant Lover", "Costigan's Travels in Portugal", "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte", and many other varied titles. Also included in this volume are lists of book purchased through the years, up to 1820. The variety and depth of the original collection is both surprising and impressive.

Some of the names included on list of Proprietors are Southgate, Shaw, Cyrus Perkins, Ezekial Palmer, William Raymond, John Cox, Nathaniel Cobb, Joseph Churchill, Thomas Ayers, William Dimmock, and Washburn. That Bridgewater had created such a place for itself years before the advent of Social Libraries is testimony to foresight of the Town fathers. Once again, the future generations owe a great deal to the foresight of the Founders of the Town.

With thanks to Lisa Olmstead, the Vermont Historical Society and "Where The Books Are", by Patricia Belding

History of Bridgewater Schools

By Bob Kancir

In 1791 when Vermont was granted statehood there were 60 families numbering 192 people in Bridgewater. From these statistics it was obvious that many of these people were children. By 1793 Bridgewater was divided into three school districts. A fourth was added in 1796 and by 1803 there were nine districts. Four years later there were 11 and by 1869 the number of school districts reached its highest number, 12.

Each district built and supported a school with at least one person elected as a trustee or overseer. In 1811, the Vermont General Assembly made it possible for towns to appropriate one cent on the dollar of their grand lists for school support to be paid in grain. This currency was due to the shortage of money and the abundance of grain. In 1824, Bridgewater voters chose the following evaluations for grain received in such payments; wheat: \$1.17, rye: \$0.56, corn: \$0.50 and oats: \$0.25.

School districts were first numbered and then acquired names developed from the neighborhoods they served. The 12 districts from 1869 were the following:

1. North Bridgewater
2. Mendell
3. Bridgewater Village
4. A district without a school house
5. Bridgewater Hollow
6. Bridgewater Corners
7. Bridgewater Hill
8. Bridgewater Center or Briggs
9. Chateaugay
10. Lower Dailey Hollow
11. Upper Dailey Hollow
12. Riverside

The first school in Bridgewater Village, a single-story brick building, was built in 1803 on land owned by Richard Southgate. In the 1840s the schoolhouse was enlarged by adding a second story. Primary students met in the downstairs room while the higher grades met in the upper room. In 1895 there were 53 students enrolled in the primary and grammar school classes.

The first school built in Bridgewater Corners stood near the home that was owned by Earl and Ruth Houghton. After it burned on February 5, 1890, its students attended school in the Grange Hall until a new school could be built across the road from the hall. In 1945, this building was updated, a woodshed added and indoor toilets provided for the first time. During the 1950s, the school served to absorb the overflow whenever the village school could not accommodate all of its primary students.

Most of the one-room schools in Bridgewater survived into the present century. The North Bridgewater and Mendell district schools closed in the early 1940s, victims of the World War II teacher shortage and the redistribution of the town population. The Bridgewater Hollow School, built in the 1820s, restored in 1899 was sold by the town in 1914. The Bridgewater Hill schoolhouse was closed and fell to ruin in the 1920's. The Chateaugay schoolhouse was closed in 1922. The Riverside school closed in 1950 and burned to the ground ten years later. The Bridgewater Center school closed in 1952. The last to close was the Bridgewater Village School in 2014.

Source: From One Room School to Union High School by Kathy Wendling

School Memories

North Bridgewater School

Kenneth Atwood (1889-1975) went to school here and gave this description of the school house:

The building had a front entry which served as a cloakroom. Inside there was a large chunk stove that stood in the middle of the room and on either side of the stove were two rows of desks. Each desk accommodated two pupils who shared a single ink well. There was one step up from the stove level to the first row of desks and another step up to the second row of desks. The teacher's desk was on a raised platform on the opposite side of the room from the entry.

North Bridgewater School



As a boy Kenneth Atwood earned five dollars one year by getting to the school house early each cold morning and having the fire going when teacher and pupils arrived.

Upper Daily Hollow School

In 1928 Nina H. Frost was the teacher and she wrote in the school register:

"Hot lunches were served from about Thanksgiving time till the very last of the year with the hearty aid of all parents and friends."

"A Halloween box social was held to raise money for lunches and was helped not only by the "Hollow" people but by teachers of Briggs school and their friends at Briggs."

Mae (Birmingham) Knudson recalls that Nina Frost made corn chowder from canned creamed corn and evaporated milk. Hanover crackers were served with the soup and the empty Hanover cracker boxes were cut into pieces and placed in a pile handy for the children to use for practice work. The lesson was copied on to a "good" sheet of paper and passed in, and the pieces of the cracker boxes were used for kindling.

Some of the desks were double and some were single and all were worn and carved with the initials of former pupils. The teacher's desk occupied the space near the wall and the blackboard, and the wood stove stood in the middle of the room. The wood shed was on the back side of the school house with a privy on either side. Drinking water was brought in from the Dailey place next door.

Bridgewater Vermont 1779-1976 Compiled by Gladys S. Adams

School Memories

continued

Riverside School

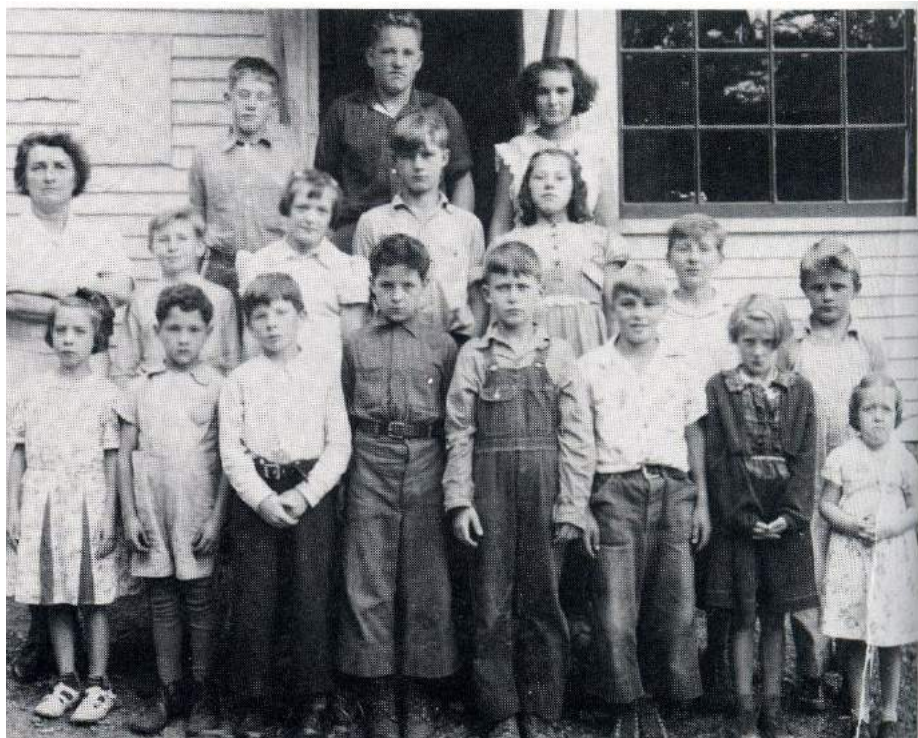
Alice Laskey married Ernest Adams and they lived on the Sidney Cummings farm for almost fifty years. In 1975 she wrote about Riverside school:

"It was reopened in Sept 1927 after having been closed for several years. Lucy Savage was the teacher that year and she boarded with us. During the November 1927 flood when roads and bridges had been washed out, Lucy Savage rode her horse to the Corners to get mail and groceries for the neighbors. We were lucky, had just gotten our winter supplies in the day before the flood. The next teacher was Ruth West and then Grace Josselyn who drove a horse and lived on the Plymouth Road".

"I have heard Etta Putnam tell about a small school house that stood just in back of the one that was there when we lived on the farm and in 1925 the cellar hole of the earlier school house could still be seen."

In 1927 the inside of the school house was one big room with windows on the end by the road and toward our farm and the teacher's desk was on the end toward the bank. Heat was provided by a big heating stove with a jacket around it, and the wood shed was in the back. About that time inside plumbing and running water were installed. Before they closed the school we used to have dances and box socials there to benefit the school."

Bridgewater Vermont 1779-1976 Compiled by Gladys S. Adams



Bridgewater Riverside School 1941-42

Annual Membership Renewal Form

We welcome new members and would love to have you join the Bridgewater Historical Society, Inc. The table below lists the yearly dues which are to be renewed each January. The Society depends on dues and fundraising to finance all activities. Please choose the level where you feel the most comfortable. Fill out the form that is below and mail it with your payment to:

Bridgewater Historical Society
P. O. Box 98
Bridgewater, Vermont 05034-0098

BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

_____ Initial _____ Renewal Date _____

Level of Membership

_____ Student	\$3.00
_____ Senior (age >62)	\$6.00
_____ Individual	\$10.00
_____ Family	\$20.00
_____ Contributing	\$50.00
_____ Donation	

*Time to renew your
 BHS Membership for 2018*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

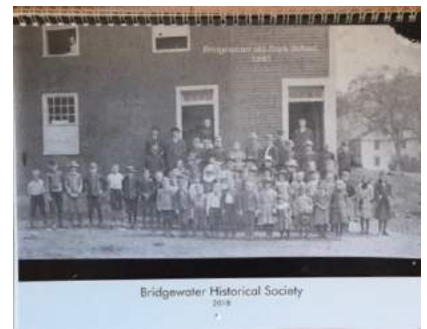
Email address: _____

Receipt Requested: Yes No

The Bridgewater Historical Society is classified as a 501(C)(3) public charity. As such, your donation is fully tax deductible.



Bridgewater Hill School circa 1890



The Bridgewater 2018 calendar is dedicated to Bridgewater schools. It filled with wonderful class photos and school buildings. The calendar can be purchased for \$10 at the the following locations: Town Clerk Office, Maple Leaf Farm, and the Bridgewater Thrift shop in the Mill.



Old Bridgewater Corners School unknown date

