

BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April 2017

Issue No. Eleven



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

Howard Coffin – “Civil War Sharpshooters”

DeAlgeroy Thompson of Bridgewater and
2nd Regiment Sharpshooters Co E
Sunday May 28th 2:00 PM

Jeff Leich – “Tales of the 10th: The Mountain Troops and American Skiing”

Including memoirs from the Crams, Glen
Woods and Wally Young
Sunday June 18th 2:00 PM

Linda Rattke – “Vermont Civil War Songbook”

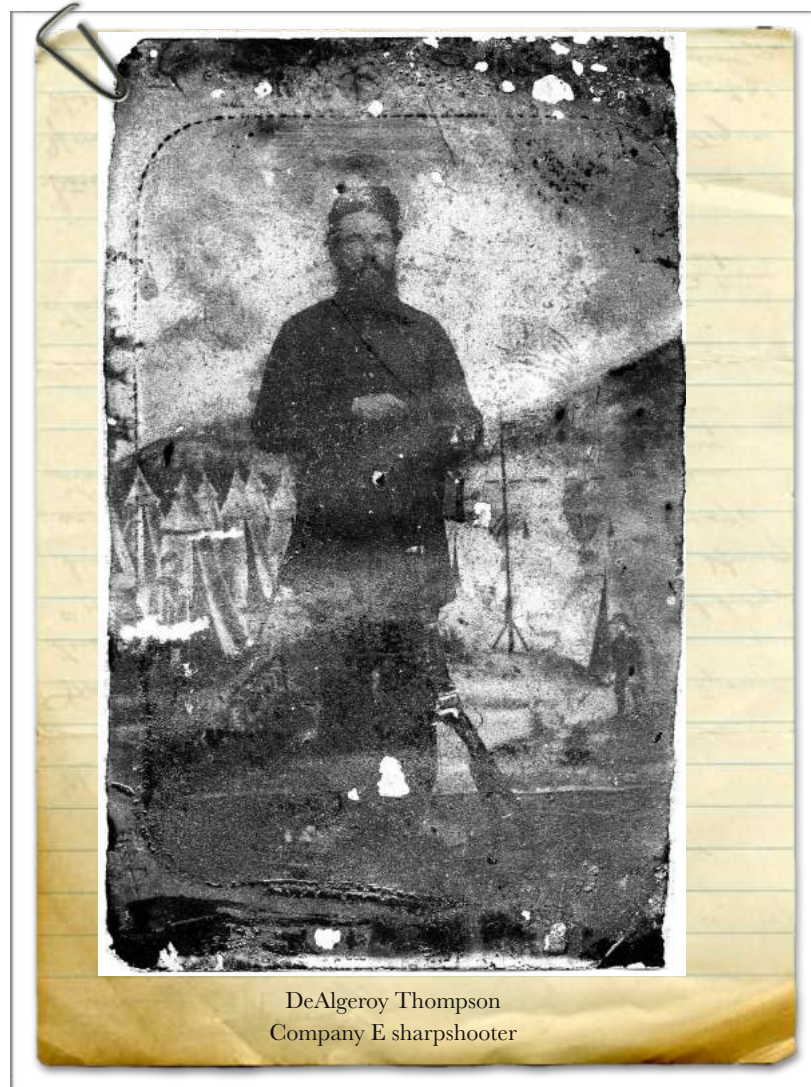
Music of the Civil War
Annual Meeting
Sunday October 22nd 2:00 PM

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
John Atwood
Nancy Kendall
Bob Kancir
Bruce Maxham
Ernest Kendall
Laura Robinson



DeAlgeroy Thompson
Company E sharpshooter

Letter From the President

By Polly Timken

Everyone has shoveled more than enough snow this year and summer is racing towards us. The Historical Society hasn't been in hibernation mode. Our stalwart crew of Board members/volunteers completed a long punch list of projects.

A much needed operations manual was completed by Bob Kancir. We can now rest a bit easy knowing that the secrets to the operations of the building have been collected in one place. One doesn't like to think of disasters, however, if there were to be a water leak or a furnace breakdown, the Board will know where valves, circuit breakers, and emergency shutoffs are. This provides us peace of mind in the case of an emergency, as well as brings us closer to compliance for any future applications for grants.

Work has begun on creating another storage area upstairs for our expanding collection. The spring cleanup crew cleared out excess attic clutter and has installed new shelving. We are looking forward to the very necessary storage space. Thanks go to Jeannette Sawyer, Bob and Sue Kancir and Sondra Stevens.

We are welcoming our season of events with Howard Coffin. He will talk on May 28th at 2:00 PM about the 2nd Company of Vermont Sharpshooters with 12 from Bridgewater alone! His talk will coincide with Darrell Thompson's discussion of his family's very generous donation of DeAlgeroy Thompson's rifle and kit.

Membership

It is not too late to renew your 2017 membership. Currently we have 163 members from 96 families from 14 states. If you need a renewal form just email us and we will send you one.

Thank you for your continued support.

bridgewaterhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

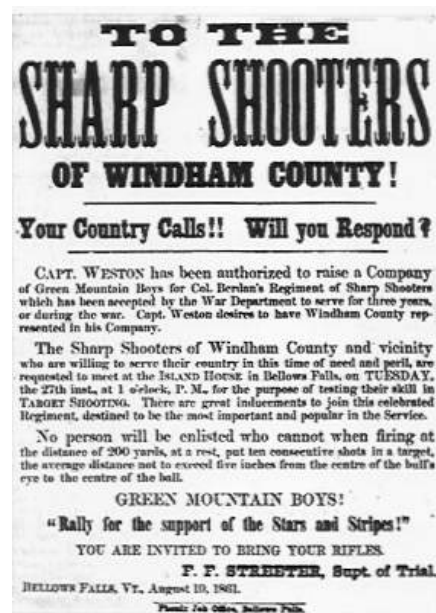
On June 18th, at 2:00 PM, Jeff Leich from the New England Ski Museum will talk on the 10th Mt. Division and the subsequent growth of the ski industry. Our own founding members, the Cram brothers, served with pride in that division.

Looking way ahead to our annual meeting to October 22, at 2:00 PM, Linda Radtke will provide an afternoon of Civil War Music and short readings from local soldiers' letters.



Linda Radtke

Please stop in this summer and enjoy the new exhibit: DeAlgeroy Thompson, Sharpshooter with the 2nd Vermont.



Sharpshooters

The term “Sharpshooter” originates from the German “Scharfschütze”, a phrase first used in Europe, ca. 1781. The first formal regiment originated in 1800 in England as the “Rifle Brigade”, (The Prince Consort’s Crown). This British Army Regiment fought in the Napoleonic Wars, (1803-1815). Their uniforms were dark green jackets, with close fitting pants and black belts, unlike traditional belts that were white with brass buckles. They carried a Baker Flintlock and were trained to be elite fighters, as opposed to rank and file soldiers.

The 1st and 2nd U.S. Sharpshooters (USSS) were formed at the suggestion of Hiram Berdan, an inventor and expert marksman. He recognized the necessity of well-trained skillful marksmen. They were the only military units that were provisioned by the U.S. Government. Traditionally, regiments were sponsored by the individual states.

Col. Berdan formed a unique regiment made up of the country’s best marksmen. He specified 2000 of the 1859 New Model Sharps rifles. They were breech loading, modified with double triggers, socket bayonets and ladder sights. Additional advantages were the folding leaf rear sight and a 900-yard center notch. These rifles could be fired much more quickly than a flintlock and could be reloaded from a prone position. Forty rounds of ammunition were usually carried and 100 if much action was expected. They could fire ten rounds a minute if necessary. Due to supply problems, they were issued a Colt five shot rifle instead of the promised Sharps rifle in November of 1861. This almost caused a mutiny but by May of 1862, the 1st Regiment received

theirs in May and the 2nd Regiment’s in June, 1862.

To qualify as a US Sharpshooter, one had to make 10 consecutive shots in a 10” target, no more than 5” from center, at 200 yards from a braced position, or 100 yards from an un-braced position. That Bridgewater sent 12 soldiers to this elite regiment is a testament to the skills of the men from here.



The Army of the Potomac –
A Sharp-Shooter on Picket Duty –
Painting by Winslow Homer, Esq. 1862

Their uniforms were green jackets with black buttons, along with light blue pants and a hair covered calfskin backpack. The hair was left on for durability and possibly camouflage. The pants were later changed to green in the War, as the enemy learned quickly to recognize the uniforms as those of the Sharpshooters and would therefore attempt

to pick them off.

Their training at the “Camp of Instruction” was tough and was taught by experienced officers, some of whom were European. Tactics, commands by bugle, and the uniforms show the influence of the Prussian Light Infantry and Riflemen. They were taught to “never expose themselves recklessly, use any available cover and to waste no ammunition”. During the fall and winter of 1861-1862, one of the most popular attractions in Washington DC was for dignitaries, politicians, and even President Lincoln, to go to the camp and watch the 1st and 2nd USSS performing drills and having target practice.

*Information provided by Darrell Thompson and
Berdan’ssharpshooters.org*

DeAlgeroy Thompson

By Darrell Thompson

DeAlgeroy Thompson (1826 - 1883) was one of seven children born in Bridgewater to Abigail (Boyce) and Cromwell Thompson. He was the grandson of Priscilla (Holmes) and Noah Thompson who settled in North Bridgewater in 1799.

DeAlgeroy married Sarah Goodenough Fish (1837 - 1904) on 4 Jul 1854. They had two young children, Willie and Abigail, who died within two weeks of each other in May 1861. His diary entry after the death of Willie says, "This is the awfulest day we ever experienced." Other diary entries reveal a life that was typical of many others in Bridgewater for almost another hundred years - working at the mill, hunting, trapping, sugaring, hiving bees, cutting wood, gardening, going to 'meeting' and the occasional lecture, and visiting or receiving friends and relatives, oftentimes 'over the mountain'.

On 18 Aug 1862, DeAlgeroy enlisted in the 2nd US Sharpshooters for three years. He fought in all of the 'Army of the Potomac' battles from Fredericksburg to Cold Harbor (including Gettysburg) before being wounded at Petersburg on 16 Jun 1864.

According to the family oral history, he was wounded by a shell fragment that hit the lower sling swivel on his

Sharps rifle before entering his right thigh. He spent time at hospitals in Washington, D.C. and Montpelier, VT before being transferred to Co. G of the 4th Vermont Volunteers when the Sharpshooters were disbanded in February 1865.

During and after the war, Sarah and DeAlgeroy had three sons that were all named for Civil War generals - Burnside (1862 - 1931), George (1866 - 1938) and John C. Fremont (1872 - 1953), known locally as 'Mont'.



USSS-1864 DeAlgeroy Thompson

In 1881, DeAlgeroy was granted a pension from the U.S.

Government. After his death in 1883, Sarah was also granted a pension. The family oral history relates that what is now the Woodbridge Bed and Breakfast was built with this pension money.

DeAlgeroy's Sharps rifle and accessories were handed down through successive generations of the Thompson family - 'Mont', Richard E., Sr., Richard E., Jr., and Darrell. It is only the second-known "Berdan" Sharps rifle that can be definitively linked to a specific member of the US

Sharpshooters. The other rifle is in the military museum at West Point.



2nd Regiment U.S. Sharpshooters Company E

The 2nd Regiment of the U.S. Sharpshooters, Company E, was recruited by Homer Stoughton, of West Randolph. They were mustered into service November 9, 1861 with 91 men officers and men, 12 from Bridgewater alone.

They joined the 2nd Sharpshooters and were assigned to the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 1st Corps under General McDowell. They fought in 27 important engagements and many other minor skirmishes. During the Wilderness Campaign of 1864, they fought in 11 battles. They were mustered out of service on November 9, 1864. Total enrollment, including 116 recruits, was 207. Of that number, 22 were killed in action, 14 died of disease, 3 died in prison, 7 deserted, 8 were captured and 57 were wounded.

Soldiers of the 2nd Regiment U.S. Sharpshooters, Company E credited to Bridgewater

1. **Atwood, Edward - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 18, **Unit(s):** 2nd USSS **Service:** enl 8/15/62, m/i 9/30/62, Pvt, Co. E, 2nd USSS, wdd, 5/12/64, pr CORP, red 1/8/65, m/o 6/19/65
VITALS - Birth: abt 1844, son of Stillman and Mary A, Atwood, Woodstock, VT, **Death:** 11/05/1883, Pittsfield, VT-**Burial:** Village Cemetery, Pittsfield, VT
2. **Blanchard, Henry K. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 35, **Unit(s):** 2nd USSS, VRC, **Service:** enl 8/4/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, tr to VRC 12/31/63, m/o 6/26/65
VITALS-Birth: abt 1828, son of Moses and Lucy Blanchard, Stockbridge, VT
Death: 03/01/1890, Bridgewater, VT **Burial:**? Vermont
3. **Clay, George A. - MILITARY SERVICE -Age:** 21,**Unit(s):** 4th VT INF, 2nd USSS -**Service:** enl 8/11/62, m/i 9/30/62, Pvt, Co. E, 2nd USSS, pr CORP 1/1/65, tr to Co. G, 4th VT INF, 2/25/65, m/o 6/19/65
VITALS -Birth: 10/23/1840, son of William & Ester Clay, lived in Plymouth, VT, **Death:** 10/26/1918 - **Burial:** New Hazardville Cemetery, Hazardville, CT
4. **Cutts, Tilton - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 32,**Unit(s):** 4th VT INF, 2nd USSS - **Service:** enl 12/11/63, m/i 1/6/64, PVT,
VITALS - Birth: 04/15/1832, son of John and Martha Cutts, Goshen, NH, **Death:** 10/18/1872, Plainfield, New Hampshire-**Burial:** East Plainfield, NH
5. **Daggett, James C. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 24,**Unit(s):** 2nd USSS -**Service:** enl 8/14/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, m/o 2/4/63
VITALS - Birth: 04/03/1838, son of John and Mirian Ann Wales Daggett in Jamaica, VT
Death: 07/21/1912, **Burial:** Pleasant View Cemetery, Jamaica, VT
6. **Hathorn, William A. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 40,**Unit(s):** 2nd USSS, VRC - **Service:** enl 8/18/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, tr to VRC 9/1/63, m/o 7/15/65
VITALS - Birth: 10/05/1821 Woodstock, VT - **Death:** 04/05/1907, **Burial:** may be in South Woodstock, VT
7. **Hathorn, Horace S. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 44,**Unit(s):** 2nd USSS, **Service:** enl 8/4/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, m/o 3/63
VITALS - Birth: abt 1818 - **Death:** unknown- **Burial:** Hillcrest Cemetery, Glencoe, MN
8. **Healey, Albert S - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 18,**Unit(s):** 4th VT INF, 2nd USSS- **Service:** enl 8/21/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. H, 2nd USSS, tr to 4th VT INF, Co. H, 2/25/65, m/o 6/19/65
VITALS - Birth: 09/06/46, Woodstock, VT - **Death:** After 4/24/1915 Lancaster, MA - **Burial:** Eastwood Cemetery, Lancaster, MA
9. **Robinson, Wallace E. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 19,**Unit(s):** 12th VT INF, 2nd USSS - **Service:** enl 8/26/62, m/i 10/4/62, Pvt, Co. B, 12th VT INF, m/o 7/14/63; enl 2/11/64, m/i 2/16/64, Pvt, Co. E, 2nd USSS, kia, Wilderness, 5/6/64-
VITALS - Birth: abt 1843, son of Jesse and Laura Sawyer Robinson, Sherburne, VT -**Death:** 05/06/1864 - **Burial:** Buried in an unmarked grave, VA
10. **Sawyer, David B. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 44,**Unit(s):** 2nd USSS - **Service:** enl 8/9/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, m/o 11/7/63
VITALS - Birth: 01/04/1818, son of Asa and Polly Barnard Sawyer Rutland County, VT: **Death:** 11/15/1899, Lasalle, Ill - **Burial:** St. Andrews Episcopal Cemetery, Grand Ridge, IL
11. **Sawyer, Elwin A. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 16, **Unit(s):** 2nd USSS - **Service:** 8/9/62, m/i 9/30/62, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, d/dis 2/15/62
VITALS - Birth: 07/25/1844 son of David B. & Eleanor C Goff Sawyer Plymouth, VT - **Death:** 02/15/1863 - **Burial:** Soldiers Home National Cemetery, Washington, DC - Cenotaph: St. Andrews Episcopal Cemetery, Grand Ridge, IL
12. **Spicer, Addison V. - MILITARY SERVICE - Age:** 22,**Unit(s):** 4th VT INF, 2nd USSS - **Service:** enl 2/11/64, m/i 2/16/64, PVT, Co. E, 2nd USSS, tr to Co. G, 4th VT INF, 2/25/65, m/o 7/13/65
VITALS - Birth: 12/31/1841 son of Theodore Melanch & Safrona Spicer in New Hampshire - **Death:** 03/23/1880 New York, NY- **Burial:** Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Bridgewater, VT

Abbreviations in 'Service' field; enl – enlisted, kia – killed in action, m/i – mustered in/out, Pvt – Private, pr – promoted, red – reduced/demoted, tr – transferred, VRC – Veterans Reserve Corps, wdd – wounded

Source: *VermontCivilWar.Org Database*
Creator/Webmaster: *Tom Ledoux*

10th Mountain Division



BHS will be hosting a presentation on the 10th Mountain Division by Jeff Leich, Executive Director of the New England Ski Museum in Franconia, NH. He is the author of 2 books, *Over the Headwall: The Ski History of Tuckerman Ravine* and *Tales of 10th: The Mountain Troops and American Skiing*. The program will be **Sunday June, 18th at 2pm at the old school.**

Birth of the Division

In November 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Finland. Finnish soldiers on skis annihilated two tank divisions, humiliating the Russians. Charles Minot (Minnie) Dole, the president of the National Ski Patrol, saw this as a perfect example of why the U.S. Army needed mountain troops. Dole spent months lobbying the War Department to train troops in mountain and winter warfare. In September 1940, Dole was able to present his case to General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, who caused the Army take action on Dole's proposals to create ski units.

On December 8, 1941, the Army activated its first mountain unit, the 87th Mountain Infantry Battalion (Later became an entire Regiment) at Fort Lewis, Washington. The unit was dubbed "Minnie's Ski Troops" in honor of Dole. The 87th trained on Mount Rainier's 14,408 foot peak. The National Ski Patrol took on the unique role of recruiting for the 87th Infantry Regiment and later the Division. After returning from the Kiska Campaign in the Aleutian Islands near Alaska the 87th formed the core of the new Division.

10th Mountain Division - World War II

This unique organization came into being on July 13, 1943, at Camp Hale, Colorado as the 10th Light Division (Alpine). The combat power of the Division was contained in the 85th, 86th, and 87th Infantry Regiments. The Division's year training at the 9,200 foot high Camp Hale honed the skills of its soldiers to fight and survive under the most brutal mountain conditions.

excerpts from:

http://www.drum.army.mil/AboutFortDrum/Pages/hist_10thMountainHistory_lv3.aspx

Bridgewater was well represented in the 10th Division. We know of 4 boys who were members:

Wendall Cram, Vern Cram, Glen Woods and Wally Young

Vern's memoirs include a nice history of his time in the 10th.

"I joined the 10th Mountain Division during WWII because it was the only outfit in the Army that had skiing in it...my one big love. My brother Wendy joined in 1941 and was one of the original Cadr'e in the Mtn training group and original 87th regiment. As soon as I graduated from high-school in June of '43, I went to Fort Devens, Mass and was in Camp Hale in July going through recruit school."

"My experience in the 10th was where my life changed forever. It was a tough, demanding, regimented, organized, mind and body building training that made a man of you fast. That would be even faster when in combat in Italy."

"I taught skiing in the 10th...winter of '43. One of the most unforgettable periods in the 10th was the famous "D" Series. Some of these training exercises that lasted 3 weeks or so long were as taxing on us as the actual fighting in Italy. I wrote a day by day diary of this. I would say the main difference was "D" Series used blanks instead of "live ammo"."

Bridgewater boys honored thru their skiing and their being
members of the 10th Mountain Division
Vermont Ski Museum



Curator's Corner

By Polly Timken

Together with the Sharps Rifle, the Thompson gift to the BHS included accessories that were owned by DeAlgeroy.

There are two tins of percussion caps made by J. Goldmark in New York. Fleeing a failed 1848 Coup against the Hapsburgs in Austria, Goldmark discovered the ignition properties of red phosphorous and obtained a patent in connection with percussion caps. He started manufacturing them in 1859 and won a US Govt. contract to supply them. The company was bought by a subdivision of Winchester in 1879. These particular tins were made in 1867 and have an engraving of an Indian shooting at a buffalo, as Sharps rifles were subsequently used out West for hunting.



The cartridge boxes contain original Sharps cartridges with linen wrapping.

In addition to the leather cartridge bag made by Kinsey, Newark NJ, DeAlgeroy also carried a mess kit. Surviving pieces include a fork, knife, cleaning jag, wrench and brass brush.





Wendall Cram
10th Mountain Division soldier

