

# BRIDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April 2018

Issue No. Thirteen



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](http://www.bridgewaterhistory.org)

## Old Brick School will be open

**2nd and 4th Saturdays**

10am to 2pm

Memorial to Columbus Day

and by  
appointment

## PROGRAMS

### 1. Care of Quilts, Old and New

Sandra S. Palmer

Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM

### 2. Maintaining Old Cemeteries

Thomas Griffin

Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM

### 3. Shays' Settlement in Vermont: a Story of Revolt and Archaeology

Stephen Butz

Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM

### 4. Bees Besieged: A History of Beekeeping

Bill Mares,

Sunday August 26<sup>th</sup> 2:00PM

### 5. North Bridgewater Cemetery

John Atwood

Date to be announced

## 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



Grandma Mason

## Letter From the President

### **Stitching Memories: 150 Years of Creativity in Bridgewater**

This spring we gathered together our impressive collection of vintage clothing and quilts for our new exhibit: **Stitching Memories: 150 Years of Creativity in Bridgewater**. Over the years our members have given us clothing used in every walk of life, from christenings to Sunday best, from weddings to war. There are examples of exquisite needlework, as shown on quilts, a child's sampler, and in the stitching on the dresses. The items collected here reflect the joy as well as unbelievable sadness: projects by individuals and those by groups, both young and old. What has resulted is a history of Bridgewater that is made up of the layers of generations of families.



Stitching Memories: 150 Years of Creativity in Bridgewater

When long time resident of Bridgewater, Kedra Greaves, had to move out of her house on Rt 4, her cousin, Kate Chipman, facilitated her very generous donation of many items from her family's house. Kedra was a concert pianist and taught music for many years. She was also the organist for the St. James church in Woodstock. Her collection not only consists of much music related ephemera, but also includes wonderful vintage clothing and crewelwork pieces. There are paper patterns for crochet work and many samples of her family's needlework. Amongst the clothing was a beautifully made cotton "suit" worn by her brother who passed away at age seven.

The photograph of "Grandma Mason" was in the Greaves Collection. While we don't know who she was, we can see she was quite a quilter. The Historical Society is very grateful to Kedra for her donation. We are lucky to have such a devoted following. Each story adds up to a more complete picture of home life in Bridgewater.

Polly Timken, President



Greaves Home on Rt 4

## Crazy Quilts

By Sue Kancir

As an avid quilter I was delighted when BHS added a Crazy quilt to our collection. A Crazy quilt is generally smaller and made for show, not function, and were principally employed as throws that were kept in the parlor. They were also referred to as "slumber robes" or "couch throws." The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition enhanced their popularity. One of the most popular exhibits was the Japanese pavilion with its fascinating crazed ceramics and asymmetrical art. With the help of popular women's magazines publishing embroidery patterns and other pattern ideas, the Crazy quilt remained popular well into the early 1900s.

Even though they look haphazard, a great deal of time was spent carefully planning the design and assuring that the pieces fit. The patchwork is asymmetrical pieces of fabric stitched together in abstract arrangements. Favorite materials for Crazy quilts include rich, dark silks, velvets, brocades, satins, and taffetas -- either new, left over from dressmaking, or salvaged from worn-out garments and home furnishings. Embellishments such as lace, buttons and ribbons were incorporated. As they became more popular, packets of silk scraps from mills and factories were sold inexpensively through mail orders making this style of quilting affordable for more women.

Marketers from all areas of consumer goods were jumping on the bandwagon. Cigarette packs reportedly contained small scraps of silk to be used in Crazy quilts. The pieces were stitched together, often with silk thread, using decorative stitches on each seam. The featherstitch was widely used to hide the raw edges. One of the oldest documented Crazy quilt was thought to be an 1865 version in the collection of Vermont's very own Shelburne Museum. Unfortunately these quilts are deteriorating as the silk used contained heavy metals to give the product weight and rustle.

Our Crazy quilt was made by Eula Curtis a Woodstock resident. She incorporated lovely "Bridgewater Old Home Day 1904-1906" ribbons. This quilt, as well as other quilts made by local quilters, will be on display in our new textile exhibit. BHS's first program of the season will be *Care of Quilts, Old and New*, with Sandra Palmer on Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Her presentation will include information on caring and dating old quilts.



### Sources:

1. American's Quilting History  
Crazy quilt History: A Victorian Craze  
[http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting\\_history/crazy.htm](http://www.womenfolk.com/quilting_history/crazy.htm)
2. THE CRAZE FOR CRAZY QUILTS BEGAN.... WHEN??  
By Cindy Brick  
[http://www.anticquiltquilt.com/The\\_Craze\\_for\\_Crazy\\_Quilts\\_began.html](http://www.anticquiltquilt.com/The_Craze_for_Crazy_Quilts_began.html)
3. Crazy quilting  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy\\_quilting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crazy_quilting)

## Union Hall



Union Hall

Town meetings were held at Union Hall from 1881 to 1948 and all manner of entertainment occurred here: dances, socials, plays, minstrels, suppers and graduation exercises, to name a few.

In 1910 F. S. MacKenzie repaired it and put in a wood furnace and electric lights. In 1923 the dimensions of the building were increased to accommodate a main hall 40 x 65', a stage 14 x 30', with a kitchen and dining room in the basement. About the 1960's it ceased to be used and in 1973 the building was torn down to make room for Hutt's Snack Bar.

From: *Bridgewater Vermont 1779-1976*  
by Gladys S. Adams

## Things to Do in Bridgewater

By Walter Houghton

The Union Hall on the upper end of the village was the entertainment center for the town. In the early days there was an old movie projector up stairs and movies were shown there. Gramp stored it in his barn for years. The last time I saw it, was in a hallway at the Mill. I hope somebody saved it. It was a part of Bridgewater history! The annual minstrel show involved just about everyone in some capacity. It was a fun time and everyone loved it although it became no longer politically correct. I used to go to the country & western shows there. We had performances by Doc Williams and once Hawkshaw Hawkins, the Nashville star that was later killed in the same airplane crash with Patsy Cline. I often think about them when I'm at the Grand Old Opry in Nashville! The other fun thing

was roller skating there. Somebody would come through with these screw-on roller skates, music sound system and colored lights. My cousin Babe was the best skater in Bridgewater when he came back from the Marines in California. With those old skates I used to get blisters on my feet as big as quarters but not to be undaunted, we skated on!



Minstrel Show 1945/46

## Bridgewater All Dressed Up



Bridgewater Corners Women 1895



Unknown gathering at Bridgewater Center



Bridgewater Mill Workers



Etta Holt , Evelyn Hubbard and Harold C Booth holding Helen. Russ Woods' Place, Bridgewater Center



## The Tragic 4th of July 1896

A glorious Fourth of July celebration was to be held on the school-grounds of the new school house at Bridgewater Corners and some of the young men had rented a cannon from Mr. Cook of Plymouth which they had been firing since midnight in honor of the day.

The cannon, six inches in diameter and sixteen inches long with a bore of one and one quarter inches, had been made by Frank Southgate many years before and although it had been altered and repaired, it was considered safe. The charge was a cup full of blasting powder, paper wadding and dirt.

Folks had been arriving in wagons from the farms in the hills for the festivities and by nine thirty a crowd of men and boys had congregated near the cannon to watch the fun. George Lombard who lived nearby, had heard the striking of metal against metal and had come over to caution the gun squad.

Charles Bedor was holding the cannon upright between his knees while he sat on a ten pound tin lard pail which contained about four pounds of powder and he was tamping the charge into the cannon with a steel rod. Charles Hadley was doing the striking with a heavy sledge hammer.

Suddenly the cannon exploded, quickly changing the holiday scene to that of a bloody battlefield and the stunned gathering stared with disbelief. Edward Horton, who was working across the road at the cheese factory, mounted his wheel and hastened to Bridgewater Village to telephone to Woodstock for help and Drs. Sherwin, Boynton, and Kidder were soon at the disaster. Bridgewater's own Dr. Boyden had gone to Quechee with the band that morning but was back by early afternoon.

Friends and neighbors used available wagons to move the injured to their homes and by evening every victim had been attended to by a doctor. The terrible accident caused three deaths:

Charles Bedor, age 31, was so badly mutilated that he died within minutes. He left a wife and three children.

William Cowdry, age 22, a "fresh air" boy from New York City, had, at age twelve, gone to live with Martin Cowdry. He died on the spot where he had been injured shortly after noon. He had no known relatives.

Bert Swan Woodward, age 13, died of his injuries on July 9. The following suffered wounds and powder burns:

Charles Hadley, George Lombard, William Rice, Julian Robinson, Harold Perkins, Wesley Barrows, James Gokey, Leroy Furman, Bert L. Hubbard, Carroll Southgate, Robert Thompson, Eddie Smith, Willie Smith and Charles Sprague.

From: *Bridgewater Vermont 1779-1976*  
by Gladys S. Adams

This is a piece of the cannon that exploded in a Bridgewater Fourth of July celebration. There used to be a paper, hand-written by my great, great, Aunt Carrie Washburn Hubbard with this. Apparently my father kept the piece of cannon and threw the paper away. I do not recall the date of this incident. I am sure it is somewhere in the history that has been written. My ancestor, Bertrand Henry Hubbard, who was born in Bridgewater in 1878, was hit in the leg with this piece of the cannon and survived.

Anyway I thought the museum should have this artifact.  
Jo Hubbard



## Curator's Corner

By Polly Timken

During the very cold and very snowy winter, the Historical Society continued to work on improving storage for our collection. Not wanting to change the configuration of the building, we researched panel systems for the small room upstairs on the West side of the building. John Nyblom not only designed the project but also built and installed the three sliding panels of screening. We will hang framed artwork on them, insuring easy accessibility and safe storage.

He also designed and built a rack for the display of quilts in our upcoming exhibit. Both of these projects were done with flexibility in mind. If usage changes, these installations can be moved.

In addition to the panels, Bob and Sue Kancir installed 3 banks of shelving in the same room for our growing collection. We hope you will take a look at the new storage space on your next visit.



## Season Events

We have an exciting list of speakers this season. All events take place at the Brick Schoolhouse.

### **Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 2:00 PM**

Sandra Palmer, expert quilter and certified quilt appraiser, will discuss **“Care of Quilts, Old and New”** Bring your mystery quilt for identification.

### **Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 2:00 PM**

Thomas Griffin, President of **Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA)** will talk about the services they offer to towns to assist with the maintenance of cemeteries. For more information the website is [www.voca58.org](http://www.voca58.org).

### **Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 2:00 PM**

Stephen Butz, author of **“Shays’ Settlement in Vermont: a Story of Revolt and Archaeology”**, will discuss his research into Shays’ Rebellion and his surprising findings. There will be a book signing. Stephen is heading up the first formal archaeological excavations of Shay’s settlement in Sandgate. Come hear about the local connection Bridgewater has with Daniel Shays.

### **Sunday August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018 2:00 PM**

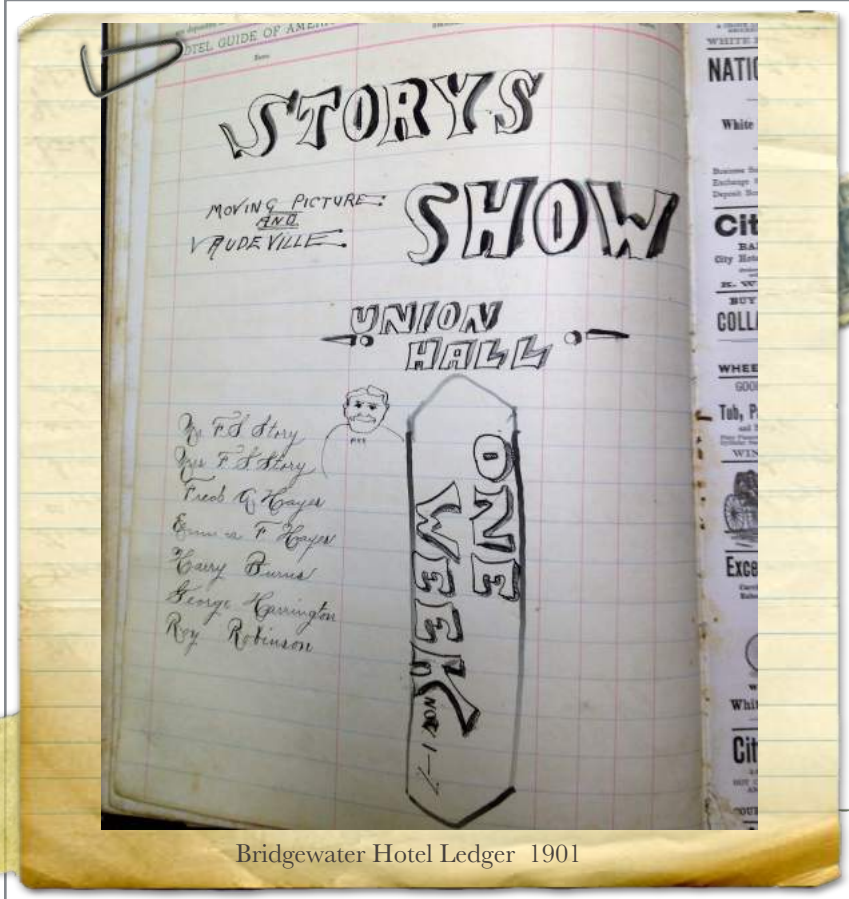
Bill Mares, writer and beekeeper for 45 years, tells of The origins and evolution of beekeeping, with particular emphasis on his research in Vermont. **“Bees Beseiged: A History of Beekeeping”** is sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council.

### **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.

### **correction to the November 2017 newsletter:**

The first school built in Bridgewater Corners stood near the home that was owned by Karl and Jean Houghton. (not Earl and Ruth)  
Thank you to the astute reader.



Bridgewater Hotel Ledger 1901

