

THETFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Calendar of Summer Events - 2006

Saturday & Sunday	24-25 June	Exhibit at Vermont History Expo at Tunbridge Fairgrounds. Visit http://www.vermonthistory.org/expo/index.htm for an overview of events.
Saturday	29 July	Exhibit at Thetford Hill Fair, 1:30 to 4:30 PM.
Sundays	6, 13, 20, 27 August, 3 September	Openings of Hughes Barn Museum, 2274 Route 113, 2-5 PM.
Thursday	21 September	Annual Meeting -Readings from the Archives, Bicentennial Gallery, 7:30 PM.
Thursday	26 October	Peter Fox Smith - "Clara Sipprell", Bicentennial Gallery, 7:30 PM.

Thetford Historical Society Library Hours:

Mondays, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM ~ Tuesdays, 10:00 AM to Noon ~ Thursdays, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
phone: (802) 785-2068 ☎ E-mail: info@thetfordhistoricalsociety.org

VERMONT HISTORY EXPO EXHIBIT

We're pleased to participate once again in the Vermont Historical Society Expo, held each June in Tunbridge. In addition to traditional historical exhibits, this year's Expo features "Remarkable Vermont Women". Our Society has chosen to honor two such women of Thetford: Bathsheba Wallace and Clara Sipprell. Bathsheba (Rich) Wallace was born in 1752 in Connecticut, and traveled north with her family to settle in Strafford. At age 24, she married Richard Wallace, and the couple settled in Rice's Mills. Bathsheba served as a midwife in seven area towns for more than 40 years, and assisting with the births of more than 1,600 children during her career.

Bathsheba's story exemplifies the common struggles of early pioneer women - keeping her home and possessions safe while her husband was away during the Revolutionary War; feeding, clothing and caring for a large family (she and Richard had 11 children), and coping with the general challenges and isolation that defined life in the pre-Vermont wilderness. We are honored to tell her story.

Our other Vermont woman is about as different from Bathsheba Wallace as you could find - a century later, urban, aesthetic. Born in Ontario in 1885, Clara Sipprell grew up in Buffalo, where she learned about photography from her brother. In 1915, she moved to New York City, and joined Alfred Stieglitz and Clarence White in what was called the Pictorial School - formal, idealized, symbolic - using a soft focus and natural light.

VERMONT HISTORY EXPO EXHIBIT, cont.

One of the first contracts was to do a series of pictures at Thetford's Camp Hanoum. She illustrated their 1917 catalog, and became intimate with the Khrabroff family, white Russians who escaped from Siberia in 1919 and settled on Thetford Hill. Irina Khrabroff, their daughter, became her partner: they shared an apartment in New York, and for years Sipprell had a summer studio next door to the Khrabroff house. In 1939, she moved her summer studio to Manchester, VT, and moved there year-round in 1955. Her work was recognized and shown in numerous galleries, including a memorial show at the Vermont Historical Society in 1980.

In late October we plan to have an exhibit of Sipprell photographs in the Gallery of the Bicentennial Building. On October 26th, we'll welcome Peter Fox Smith (of VPR's Saturday Afternoon at the Opera) to talk about his work with Sipprell toward the end of her life. Almost all of the Sipprell photographs that we plan to show in Tunbridge will be of local places and people. While she was in Thetford, Clara Sipprell produced correspondence cards with photos of Thetford and Hanover. We will be offering these cards, with envelopes, at Tunbridge, the Thetford Hill Fair, and at the Historical Society.

SHAKER CHEST

One of our prized possessions is a tall chest made by the Shaker Colony in Enfield, NH. The chest has eighteen small drawers above, a wide sliding shelf, and three large drawers below. It was left to us about twenty-five years ago by Margaret Vaughan Hutchinson, whose family (Charles Augustus Vaughan), lived in the south half of the double house on Thetford Hill.

This summer the desk will be on loan, along with items lent by Dartmouth College and five private collectors, for an exhibit in the Great Stone Dwelling at the Enfield Shaker Colony on Route 4. Though Shaker furniture shares some common characteristics, each colony had variations in style, and this will be a rare chance to see a lot of Enfield craftsmanship. The exhibit opened on the 4th of June, and will continue through October.

PHOTO SCANNING DAY

Our first-ever photo scanning day was held on April 29th. Our goal was for community members to bring in their old photos to be scanned and added to our collection. Though the total number of persons who came in was less than ten, we obtained some genuine photo treasures, including images of the first Stevens District and Senter District schoolhouses - both of which are now gone, early photos from Burnham Road, Rice's Mills, Post Mills and North Thetford, and a photo of Thetford's first Fire Station on Route 113, prior to the construction of I-91. We plan to repeat this event in the fall.

BARN MUSEUM WORK DAY

In late April we had a productive work day at the Museum, with Chuck Eaton, Joe Deffner, Rick Hoffman, Richard Krzal, and Charles Latham. We made good progress on two fronts: to finish sorting the material left us by Charles Hughes, and choosing among the multiple copies of some items - planes, augers, hay knives, yarn-winders - to keep the best examples. We hope to have another work day, and to have the Museum in good shape for our August-Labor day weekend openings.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

In May, we welcomed Mrs. Lange's 3rd grade from the Elementary School, who added to their knowledge of maps and mapping. Assisted by local cartographer Andy Boyce, the students looked at Thetford's original boundary layout that accompanies the Town Charter, a copy of a 1790 map of Thetford, and town maps from the mid-1800s. It was interesting to compare and discuss maps from different periods - what had changed and what had stayed the same - in terms of both features on the maps and the technology used to create the maps themselves. Students also had a chance to handle compasses and a surveyor's chain, which would have been used by early map-makers. We're pleased to report that every TES third grader, as well as their teachers, are now members of the Historical Society.

Also in May, Joe Deffner brought three 7th grade classes to the Society's library to research the history of Thetford Center. Joe's students focused on buildings on Route 113 from the Wallace Vault north to Tucker Hill Road, and west up Tucker Hill Road to the "Milk House". In three stations, students viewed early photos of their sites, looked at early maps of the area, and read excerpts from Thetford Center's National Historic Register designation, town histories, and transcribed oral histories that pertained to the area. Our materials aided them in answering a thoughtful set of questions comparing the past to the present, and hopefully provided a better understanding of the people and industries that defined early Thetford Center.

In May, two Academy sophomores, Jordan Bach-Lombardo and Will Wickham, came in to do research in conjunction with their American history courses.

SPRING MEETING

On May 25, we had a capacity crowd of 35 to hear Charles Latham show and explain our two globes, one terrestrial and one celestial, made by James Wilson of Bradford in 1826 and 1822, respectively. The first was given to us forty years ago by Trustee Louis Hunter, the other came to us through Latham Library, which probably got it through its connection with Thetford Academy. The earliest catalog we have for TA, 1827, lists instruction in the use of globes" as part of the curriculum.

Charles's talk began with a brief history of map-making, the development of the idea that the earth might be a sphere rather than a flat surface, and the slow realization by globe makers that there was a very wide Pacific Ocean between America and China. He then told how Wilson, trained as a farmer and blacksmith, became obsessed with making a globe, and laboriously taught himself engraving and geography (which had many gaps at the time), and made almost all his tools except paper. Finally, the talk described the meticulous work done on both globes by the experts at the Art Conservation Center at Williamstown, MA, to make our pair of globes probably in the best condition of any now known.

Thetford Historical Society Trustees - 2006	
Charles Latham, <i>President</i>	Barbara Conduct, <i>Vice President</i>
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Joe Deffner	Jean Munn
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Rick Hoffman	Caroline Cressman Riggs, <i>emerita</i>
Richard Krzal	Louise Vaughan, <i>emerita</i>



BARN MUSEUM

The Hughes Barn Museum will be open on Sunday afternoons in August from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. Continuing with a successful additional day implemented last year, we will also be open the Sunday of Labor Day week-end, September 3rd. Watch for details on special exhibits and demonstrations for each of our open Sundays, including a celebration of Thetford's 245th birthday on August 13th.

THETFORD'S WINE MEASURES

About 5 years ago, Trustee Barbara Wyman gave us a set of copper measures which her grandfather, Rev. William Shade, had bought at an auction in the 1920s. The Slades always said that these were the Town's official measures (to insure that each store or tavern sold the full amount of a promised volume). Three of these measures have the initials PD punched into the handle, and two of the larger measures have small holes pierced in below the upper rim (so the measure didn't need to be filled to the top). Last week Martha Howard, while going through early town invoices, found the following:

*The Measures of the Town of Thetford Sir
pay Wm. Child Fifteen Dollars for cash he
paid out for Copper Wine Measures for the Use
of the Town out of the Seven Mill Tax granted
Sept. AD 1802 & committed to Capt. Roger Ranstead
to collect
Nath. Kilborn Select
David D. Bryant Men*

For those unaccustomed to reading early 19th century script, the text of the document reads:

"The Treasurer of the Town of Thetford Sir pay Wm. Child Fifteen Dollars for cash he paid out for Copper Wine Measures for the use of the Town out of the Seven Mill Tax granted Sept. AD 1802 & committed to Capt. Roger Ranstead to collect. Nath. Kilborn and David D. Bryant, Selectmen".

The wine measures and their newly-discovered history are on display in the Historical Society's Exhibit room in the Bicentennial Building.

MEMBERSHIPS

It is time now to renew your membership for the year 2006-2007. Please use the enclosed envelope.



