

THETFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Calendar of Spring Events - 2007

Thursday 5 April

"*Vermont and the Civil War*" with author Howard Coffin. Union Village Schoolhouse, 7:00 PM. Co-sponsored with Norwich Historical Society

Saturday 12 May

"*Log Drives on the Connecticut*" with author Bill Gove. Talk/walk followed by Potluck Supper, North Thetford Church Hall, 4:00 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

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HAPPENING THIS SPRING

The main purpose of this newsletter is to let you know about these two programs. They are both changes from our usual meetings. The April meeting with author/historian Howard Coffin is a Vermont Council on the Humanities program, and is jointly sponsored with the Norwich Historical Society. The program will be held in the Union Village Church Hall (former schoolhouse) on Main Street in Union Village. Coffin will speak about Vermont venues that were important to the state's participation in the conflict, as well as specific Civil War battles in which Vermont soldiers played a significant role. We plan to exhibit several recently discovered Civil War artifacts (from cleaning bees at the Hughes Barn Museum) that evening, as well.

The May meeting on log drives will be held in North Thetford, a short walk from the Connecticut River where many log drives took place. Author and forester Bill Gove will speak on early logging methods accompanied by slides. We will have a potluck dinner following Mr. Gove's talk.

Looking ahead, we are planning a booth at the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge on Saturday and Sunday, the 23-24th of June. Our subject will be the Union Village Dam: the floods that caused it to be built; the actual construction; and some of the landmarks it caused to disappear.

Before we open the Hughes Barn Museum in August, we hope to get a new non-mud floor in the carriage shed of the main barn, and to re-arrange the collection in the east end of the barn so that it is more easily viewed. We are not sure yet when this work will take place, but when it does, we could use some strong help to move things around. If anyone is interested in helping with some heavy lifting, please call 785-2068 and let us know.

During the past few months, we have had inquiries about two Thetford natives who became generals. A short account of their careers seems an appropriate appetizer to Mr. Coffin's talk about the Civil War.

- Charles Latham

THETFORD'S CIVIL WAR GENERALS

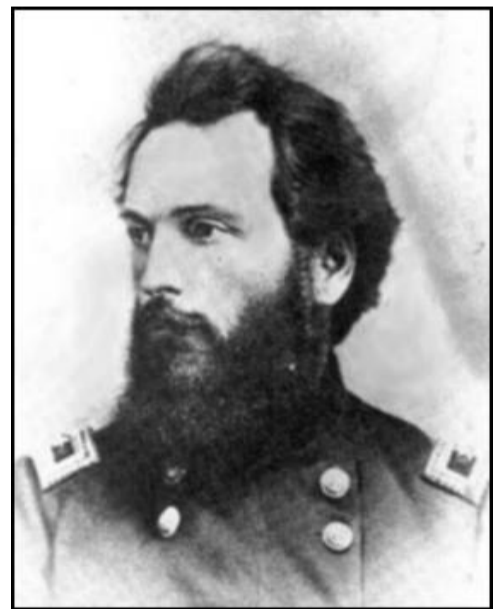
From unlikely sources come the most interesting bits of information. For example - two recent genealogical requests have involved men born in Thetford, who went on to distinguished civil and military careers.

Our first request came from the Chaplain at Camp Jackson Army facility in Columbia, South Carolina. Ken Lawson was researching Gustavus Loomis, a Thetford native, born in 1789. After completing his early schooling in Thetford, Loomis entered West Point, and graduated 10th in his class in 1811. Shortly thereafter, he was active in the Niagara theater during the War of 1812. Throughout that conflict, and for the next fifty years, Loomis' service covered a wide geographic area - as far north as Canada and New York, south to Florida and Louisiana, and west to Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma.



Major General Gustavus Loomis

The second Thetford native to achieve the rank of general was Charles Hovey, born in 1827. The Hovey family lived on Burnham Road, in what is now the Haugen residence. Hovey graduated from Thetford Academy in 1848 and from Dartmouth College in 1852. He financed his education by teaching during school vacations, and following graduation from Dartmouth, taught in Framingham, MA, and later moved west to Illinois. There he was principal of Peoria, Illinois, Boys High School, Superintendent of Peoria schools, President of the State Teacher's Association, member of the first State Board of Education, and founder of the original State Teachers' University at Normal, Illinois. Hovey's transition from educator to soldier came at the commencement of the Civil War, when, in 1861, he organized the 33rd Illinois Infantry; a regiment largely comprised of teachers and students at Normal. He and his regiment saw service in Missouri and Arkansas. Hovey was wounded in 1863 at Arkansas Post, but continued to command his regiment. At the conclusion of the war, Hovey was promoted to the rank of Major General. He retired to Washington, where he worked as a military pension reform lobbyist. He died in 1897, and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Major General Charles Hovey