



Pownal Gateway

Pownal Historical Society, Inc.

February 2009

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Websites worth visting:

Pownal Historical Soc.:
www.pownal.org

Pownal Wiki:
pownal.pbwiki.com

Vermont Folklife Center:
www.vermontfolklife-center.org

Objects Stimulate Memories



At our November meeting, members and friends brought in various objects that evoked memories and thoughts about Pownal's past.

A pewter candlestick owned by Ted Atkinson

was one of the few remaining belongings from his great uncle Reynolds Carpenter's house on Carpenter Hill after it burned one dark night in 1911. Charlotte Comar's mother's maple sugar molds reminded her of her parent's "sugar-on-snow" parties in the summer. Her father stored the snow in a freezer until the party. Fran Lampman talked about her father's forceps, which he used to pull at least one man's tooth. Her father was no dentist, but sold automobiles in Pownal Centre. It seems the real dentist couldn't get the long tooth out. Anson Mason showed everyone a butter dish that once belonged to his relative who owned Grand View Lodge (see the poem on page 4 of this newsletter).

Jackie Mason (right) displayed part of her cowbell collection. Linda Hall (above with Sue Sweeney) unveiled artifacts from Solomon Wright. Jean Overstreet passed around a board found when her house was remodeled: it was signed and dated by the carpenter who did the original work.(cont. p. 3)



Donations to the Society

Over the course of the past year, a number of people have donated gifts of money or artifacts to the Pownal Historical Society. Most recently we received a generous donation on behalf of Cleveland E. Dodge, Jr., and Cleveland E. Dodge III.


New Member

Please join us in welcoming our newest member: John W. Card, Kensington, CA

Join Our Planning for Pownal's 250th Anniversary

The Select Board of Pownal has authorized the planning of events for Pownal's 250th Anniversary. Ray Rodrigues and Wendy Hopkins are seeking volunteers, either individuals or organizations, who are willing to plan and implement special events during the year. These events do not have to be historical in nature, but could be anything from dances and potlucks to recreational events to historical events. If you or an organization you belong to would like to participate, please notify Ray at: raymond_rodrigues@msn.com or Wendy at: whopkins1@gmail.com

In addition, the Historical Society also wants ideas and volunteers for projects that it can sponsor during 2010. Please send Ken Held any ideas you may have: kwheld@comcast.net

Officers	Pownal Historical Society, inc. P.O. Box 313 Pownal, VT 05261	Our Goals
Ken Held, President Fran Lampman, Vice President Charlotte Comar, Treasurer Wendy Hopkins, Secretary	 kk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise public awareness of Pownal's history: its founding fathers and its early inhabitants.
Board Members Ted Atkinson, Programs Charles Clark Joyce Held Margaret Lillie Jeanne Overstreet, Membership Raymond Rodrigues, Newsletter Sue Sweeney		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stimulate our children's interest in the history of Pownal.• Gather and preserve historical data and artifacts.• Share with other communities data relevant to their history.
Website: www.pownal.org E-mail: pownal@comcast.net Wiki: http://pownal.pbwiki.com	Thomas Pownall	

Peddlers, Cattle Dealers, and Hobos by Charlotte Comar

When I was growing up on the South Stream Road in Pownal, it was almost a daily occurrence for a peddler to appear at our door selling his or her wares. Some just happened to arrive at mealtime; some were invited to eat with us and some were not.

A few of them still stand out in my mind. One was the Singer Sewing Machine man, Mr. Lothar, who stopped in on a regular basis to see if Mother needed parts for her treadle sewing machine, thread, needles and other accessories; always hopeful that her machine might be beyond repair and he could make a big sale of the most up-to-date item.

There were the Raleigh and the Watkins representatives, who sold spices, extracts, cold remedies, first aid supplies and other small items. I can't remember any one specific person except for my Aunt Mattie, who supplemented her other endeavors by peddling Watkins wares.

It's hard to forget the cattle dealers, who came rattlin' in the yard in their big trucks with a poor calf or cow caged or simply tied on the back of the truck. The two I remember were Morris Levin from Bennington and Mr. Melchior from the North Adams area. My father would leave his noon meal on the table; be gone for what seemed like hours and come back owning a new critter or having sold or traded one of his. Sometimes it would be a favorite calf of mine that went out, which gave way for the tears to flow.

One of our favorite peddlers was Lou King, the Worthmore Feed salesman from North Adams. He was "tall, dark and handsome" (or seemed that way in my young eyes!) and I was always pleased when Mother put another plate on the table for him. He – and later his wife and daughter – remained friends of the family long after peddling grain from door to door was in style.

Hobos were not uncommon back then and more than one summer morning my father would find one sleeping outside the house when he went out to do his early chores. They would work a few days and be gone as quietly and swiftly as they came. One in particular I recall appeared early in the morning from behind the stone wall across the road, apparently having spent the night there. He stayed a couple weeks – I don't remember his name or whether he was black or white, but the thing that sticks in my mind is that he said he lived on Peachtree Street in Georgia!

The one special peddler that I remember fondly was Pat Baker, who ran Ben Powell's store in Pownal. He stopped in on Tuesdays (or was it every other Tuesday?), take an order and bring it the next time he came. He was always welcome at the dinner table and if it was during sugaring, Mother would plan to have some maple syrup simmering on the stove for sugar-on-snow when he got there. He carried an order pad with him on which he wrote the items you wanted delivered the next time around. There was a little poem on the back of each sheet and that poem has stayed in my head all these many years:

You need your money and I need mine;
If we both get ours it's mighty fine.
But if you get yours and keep mine, too;
What in the world am I to do?

2008 Holiday Party

Fire in the fireplace, goodies all around
Our Holiday party at Ted & Anne's
Was the best in all the town!

Anne and Ted Atkinson were so kind to host the Historical Society's Holiday Party. We didn't lack for food, drink or conversation all evening. The tables were full of platters of food and goodies. The tree was decorated and the candles lit. It was a magical evening with our friends and a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season. Thank you Anne & Ted. We appreciate your hospitality and friendship.--Joyce Held



In the photo to the right, empty plates of Charlie Brooks, Ted Atkinson, and Warren Mason show how much they enjoyed the food. --the editor

In Remembrance of Helen Renner, First President of the Pownal Historical Society by Joyce Held

Wonderful, caring, loving, giving, generous, witty, knowledgeable, beautiful, I could go on and on with words that would describe Helen Renner and I still would miss some I'm sure. When Helen passed away the Historical Society, the town of Pownal, George, her family and I lost a dear, dear friend. It's hard to put into words the impact Helen had on so many lives. She truly was a special woman.

This is what I wrote in the online guest book for Helen:



As we take our journey through life many people pass by. Some stay for a brief time, to be forgotten as quickly as last year's roses, while others move into our hearts and stay. We are blessed to have those who stay and make our journey more enjoyable. I have been blessed to have Helen Renner as one who stayed in my heart. I learned to love and admire Helen as I grew to know her. She was a little lady with a large heart that burst with love and pride for her home town and state. The Renner's door was always open to anyone who needed shelter or a shoulder to cry on. Helen was always willing to do what was needed for her town and neighbors. I could go on forever listing all the things that Helen did for Pownal, but anyone who has lived here for a time would already know and could probably add to my list. It's not necessary to list her many contributions, it is only necessary to say she did so because she was a good person of strong faith that knew the true meaning of the golden rule.

One of the last things that Helen said to me was, "Don't forget me". Helen, till my journey ends and we meet in heaven you will live in my heart. I love you.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, February 22, 2 p.m.

Bring Old Photographs to Our February Meeting

On February 22nd, at 2 p.m. in the Solomon Wright Public Library, members, friends, and neighbors are invited to bring their old photos of life in Pownal's past to show and talk about. We will have a document display projector set up to project the photos on a screen so that everyone can see them and learn about them. Afterward, we hope to have time to scan the photos to make digital copies for our records and for possible uses in the future. If we don't have time to scan all the photos, we hope to be able to capture them in coming days.

Please tell any friends and neighbors who might have old photos about this event and invite them to share them with everyone. If they can't attend on this day, perhaps they will let you take them to the meeting. Every once in a while a photo pops up in someone's back drawer that really should be shared with others and preserved

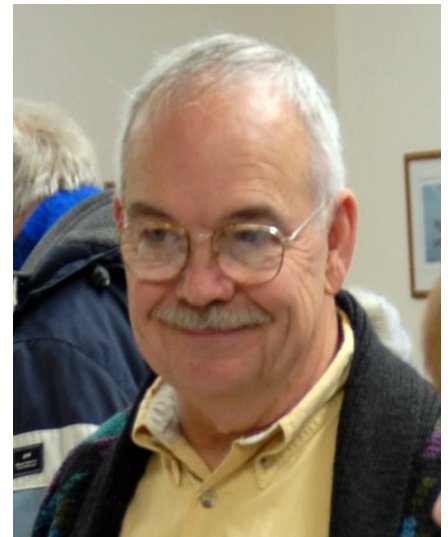
digitally for the history of Pownal to be enriched. Check your closets, and we'll see you all there.

President's Message

by Ken Held

Happy New Year to all our Members & Friends,

If you listen to the news, we are in for some troubled times. "The bottom is falling out", "Billionaires are ending their lives because of this economy", etc, etc. The media is feeding us nothing but bad news. It's times like this that I am happy to be a historian. If we all just take a moment and look back in time, we will see that although the bottom is getting closer, it's not falling out. We will survive just as those before us. It will not get as bad as what our ancestors went through. We will need to tighten our belts but again maybe that's something we all should have been doing already. We've been spoiled by too much of "if you want it, get it and pay for it later". I can remember hard times growing up but I doubt if the generations after me have any memories of hard times when the choice was food for the table or wood for the fire. We have finally pushed the limit and now things have got to change. I like to think we are going through an adjustment phase. We need to learn from our ancestors and get our priorities straight and then we all can get back on track. Of course, we need to get our government back on track to change the big picture. Here's hoping our new President and his people will be able to do just that. In the meantime, pick up your history books and read about what it was like during the great depression and then look around you. Things aren't so bad after all, are they? May 2009 be a happy and healthy year for each and every one of you.



Objects and Memories, cont. from page one

Joyce Held displayed a fragment of iron with a metal loop, possibly part of an old pot or equipment lost on the old military road. Bud Willette showed a photo album that led to memories of his days playing in various bands. Ray Rodrigues passed around a doll's head from the mid-19th Century that he dug up in his garden and an old "hog scraper" candlestick that he discovered in his barn. Wendy Hopkins shared old postcards of Pownal. Being able to handle objects from the past brought that past to life and led to lively conversations.

Poem taken from an old Grand View Farm brochure:

A Toast To Vermont

Up where the north winds blow just a little keener,
Up where the grasses grow just a little greener,
Up where the mountain peaks rise a little higher,
Up where the human kind draws a little nigher,
That's where Vermont comes in.

Up where the snows of winter last a little longer,
Up where the heart beats just a little stronger,
Up where the handclasp is just a little warmer,
That's where Vermont comes in.

Up where the lonesome pine its nightly requiem sighs,
Up where the unpolluted waters take their rise,
Up where the sons of toil have fought for freedom's sod,
Up where all nature's mood is a little nearer to God,
That's where Vermont comes in.



Wendy Hopkins and Penny Willette celebrating the Historical Society at our Holiday Party (or celebrating something)

Vermont Historical Society and Vermont Women's History Project Explore Merger--E-mail announcement from the Vermont Historical Society

BARRE: Vermont Historical Society and the Vermont Women's History Project have entered into an agreement to explore the feasibility of continuing the Vermont Women's History Project within the work of the Vermont Historical Society.

"Vermont Historical Society trustees and staff are tremendously enthusiastic about the mission of the Women's History Project and its work of bringing to light the accomplishments and history of Vermont women," stated Sarah Dopp, President of the Vermont Historical Society, "and we believe that the project tracks beautifully with the VHS mission."

The Vermont Women's History Project was originated by the Vermont Commission on Women and has been housed within the Commission since its founding. The Project promotes education and research on Vermont women's history and makes the information available through a web site, programs and other presentations.

Judith Irving, Director of the Vermont Women's History Project, agreed with Dopp's statement that "The role of women in shaping our state history has traditionally been underserved. Continuing our focus on women's history is essential. Bringing this work under the Society's umbrella will further integrate women's history into Vermonters' overall understanding of our heritage." Dopp also noted that the Society's recently established Deborah Pickman Clifford Legacy Fund will, in part, help highlight women's history in Vermont.