



POWNAI GATEWAY

Pownal Historical Society, Inc.

October 2006

Vol. 4, No. 3

Meeting Schedule

Oct. 22. Collecting
Historical Documents.
Kevin Graffagnino. Pownal
Library. 2 p.m.

Dec. 8: Holiday Party

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Selected Pownal-related Websites:

Historical Society:

www.pownal.org

Vermont in the Civil War

<http://www.vermontcivilwar.org/units/>

Wikipedia on Pownal:

[En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pownal%2C_Vermont](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pownal%2C_Vermont)

Vermont Archaeological Society:

www.vtarchaeology.org

Pownal Planning

Pownal.pbwiki.com

Solomon Wright Public Library:

<http://solomonwrightlibrary.org/>

Archaeological Discoveries in Pownal



On September 28, Dr. Ellen Cowie, Director of the Archaeology Program at the University of Maine – Farmington (UMF), intrigued her audience by discussing what archaeologists have learned about the lives of Native Americans in the Pownal area. After her talk, the enthusiastic listeners gathered around as she showed and described artifacts from the Cloverleaf Site in Bennington and our Library's George Sweeney collection.

UMF determined that the Cloverleaf Site dated back to the Late Archaic Period, approximately 3900 years ago. The large quantity of Butternuts found in roasting pits indicated that the site was probably occupied in the late summer and early fall over a number of years. A small site found east of town yielded a few artifacts from the Middle Archaic period.

Pownal probably has more Native American sites than Bennington because the Hoosic floodplain provided better living conditions than the Walloomsac. Dr. Cowie showed pictures and diagrams of surveys along Rt. 7 which discovered some small sites and which also tested the site of School #7. Several Pownal residents brought their own collections for Dr. Cowie to see and describe.

Civil War Soldiers from Pownal

On Sept. 10, historian Joseph Parks summarized his research into soldiers from Pownal who died during the Civil War, cautioning his audience that soldiers were often listed as being from the town where they enlisted, not where they lived. He reported on the following: Henry Amidon, Jonathan Camp, Lucien A. Foot, Norman Geary, Charles Rice, James Lockwood, Merritt Johnson, Charles Larrabee, Emerson Lee, Myron Lillie, Orin Montgomery, Erwin Niles, Johnson Niles, William Reynolds, William Mills, Charles Weiss, and M. Barber. He told about Capt. George Bean of Co. G, 1st Vt Cavalry, a blacksmith from Pownal who was court-martialed and moved to the South after the War.



Message from President Ken Held

Dear Members,

During the course of our lives we cross paths with many individuals. Each impacts our lives in their own special way. Some good, some not so good. The best advice I can give on this subject is to try and learn from each encounter.

Recently, I was reminded of my encounter with a lady who came to one of our Historical Society meetings a few years ago. Her name was "TJ," and she was very interested in helping. She and her husband had recently moved to Pownal, and both were interested in our community. Little did we know that TJ and her husband would have such a positive impact on our small community. As a member of the Society and eventually serving as a Board Member, TJ and her husband helped in every way possible, such as taking on the project of our booth at the Vermont History Expo, working the booth, and for many years going up and taking the booth down and hauling it back to Pownal. TJ always amazed us with her great treats when it came time for refreshments. In her quiet way, she always was there to lend a helping hand if we needed someone to take notes, pictures or just setting up chairs. Most often than not her husband was there helping along with her showing us all what dedication is all about in the community as well as marriage. When I became ill and could no longer work on the newsletter, it was TJ who took it on with the help of her husband. They did a wonderful job for the Society. In the meantime, they both were active in other community projects making Pownal a better place to be. Over the course of time we all got to know TJ and Ken Norris as the kind of people that make everyone smile. You can't help but admire their dedication to each other and to their community. I was saddened to receive TJ's email saying she needed to step down from our Board. We all enjoyed working with her and wish her all the best as she continue to spread her smile and enthusiasm throughout our town. In closing I would like to say thank you to TJ and to Ken for all the work they have done for our Society and for our town. Pownal and the Historical Society were truly blessed the day TJ and Ken Norris moved into town!

Upcoming Meetings

October 22 – Paper Treasures of the Green Mountains

On Sunday, October 22, at 2 p.m. in Pownal's Solomon Wright Library, Kevin Graffagnino, Director of the Vermont Historical Society, will talk about "collecting Vermontiana": what paper documents reveal about the history of Vermont. He'll answer questions about such documents as maps, letters, and newspapers. He invites anyone who has historic paper items related to Vermont to bring them to the talk. The talk is open to the public.

December 8 -- Holiday Party

Mark your calendars for our Historical Society's annual holiday party on December 8, with more details to follow in the mail. Please save canned goods for the food donation we collect at the party.

Rachel Mason shared a copy of a schoolboy's "Composition written by Ammon Fowler, February 1858." For this contribution to Pownal's history, we are grateful to Rachel.

My Journey and Visit to the Moon

Jack Cook and myself thought we would take a ride in a balloon we therefore went to the United States balloon manufacturer & engaged him to prepare us a balloon that would go up 6,000 miles, he prepared one for us & we started on our ride we went up and up till we got up so far that the Earth looked like a ball we got up where the air seemed oppressive we were looking around the balloon Jack saw some bottles which we held before our eyes to see what was in them, perceived that they contained the elixir of life which seems to have been put there by the balloon maker I took my eyes from the bottles and saw that the balloon was going off sideways I spoke to Jack & we soon saw that it was lowering slowly & slowly it went down soon we discovered what we thought to be the Earth we got so near that we saw it was not the place from whence we started we landed & was looking around to see where we were I saw a man coming towards us we waited for him he asked us which way we were traveling Jack told him we were strangers & in a strange place we informed him how we came there; he told us we were on the Moon; he asked us to go home with him and stay all night. As it was getting late in the afternoon we accepted the offer he told us as we walked towards his home that he was 80 years old his wife was 75 years in age, his mother he said was living with him & was 120 years old I expressed my surprise on hearing of a person so advanced in years he told us that a great many of the people lived to be 170, & he knew of one instance of a person living to the advanced age of 200 by this time we had reached his house we had ham & eggs for supper we then retired rest rose in the morning and went to the kitchen his wife had her breakfast smoking on the table which consisted of Brown bread Blackrye pancakes potato sauges & others things necessary when we had finished our breakfast he told us if we would stay there to day he would go with us to see the country he said he had some grain out that he wanted to get in we informed him that we were willing to help him away we went to the barn & got the Donkeys to draw in the Blackrye it resembled our Buckwheat we got that in by sundown. The next day we went fishing, caught some fish I was not acquainted with got some like our trout I could not remember what they called them it was a very singular name The most beautiful lakes I ever saw I saw some very very large steamboats I should think by the description as large as the Leviathan made in London ~~that you read of~~ next we went a hunting first we went in a very nice sugar grove next we went into a pine grove next the Beachwood & so on each kind of tree grew by its self as I have mentioned in our route we killed 1 deer & spotted squirrels & Black squirrels & rabbit & foxes 3 pigeons. There was so many volcanoes we thought we would like to visit one we started on our journey we had a very rough road ~~but~~ at last we reached the top it was a very splendid site which well repaid us for our trouble on our return I walking through the lava there was such much attached to our eastern boots that we had to leave them if any one should ever go there they will be apt to find them & no by that incident that they were not the first that ever performed the perilous journey on our way back we stopped to refresh ourself at the mansion of Chas Hillinburer a beautiful spot surrounded by stately trees and green fields. Having rested from our journey we started for the dwelling of our host & made arrangements to leave for home the next morning, having our balloon prepared we arose in the morning after eating a light breakfast & bidding our friends adieu we set sail we soon lost sight of the moon & it was sometime ere we could discover the Earth as soon as we got near enough to discover land from water we saw that we were near the Atlantic coast we ~~started~~ steered our course to the westward when we thought we was near the right place we let off our gas and down we came on the hogback we stepped in the grocery there we found some who greeted us on our safe arrival & after having drank with them we left for our respective ~~homes~~ places of abode having been absent two month and ten days

Pequot War and Pownal Families

by Charles Clark

The 1637 Pequot War taking place in Mystic and Fairfield Connecticut was an inevitable War between the new English settlers and Native Americans resulting in the annihilation of the Pequot Tribe. After a series of escalating encounters and reprisals, combined military forces from Massachusetts and the settlements of Windsor, Hartford, Wethersfield, and Saybrook were sent on the offensive led by Capt. John Mason. The settlements with a population of approximately 250 provided 60 militia. Written history of the war is limited to Capt. Mason's account, land grants, minimal general court records, and a historic letter by Lt. Lyon Gardiner of Saybrook.

William Phelps of Windsor presided over the general court that authorized the war. His progeny during the 1600's married into the Barber, Dunham, and Hosford families of Pownal. Rev Elnathan Phelps who died in Pownal (probably of Pittsfield) was a direct descendant. Thomas Barber also of Windsor is mentioned in Mason's account. Another source notes a discussion between Barber and Lt. Cook on religious and church matters while returning from the fight. Subsequently Thomas Barber struck the Lt. and the Court adjudged that he forfeit his rank of Sergeant and pay a fine.

Lt. Robert Seeley, second in command, of Wethersfield was struck in the face with an arrow at Mystic and his exploits are noted by Mason. Seeley was appointed to take inventory of John Oldham's estate. His murder on Block Island had fostered the war. Of historical note, this is the same John Oldham involved with the "Lyford affair" in the Plymouth Colony. Lt Gardiner's recollections and general court assignments give further information on Lt Seeley. Thomas Munson then of Hartford (latter of New Haven) received an allotment in Soldiers field as payment of services.

Lt. Lyon Gardiner's letters written to Robert Chapman have considerable historical importance and provide an indirect Pownal relationship. The Chapman family is closely intertwined with the Bushnell, Stannard, and Scranton names of early Pownal.

Where Do Your Dues Go?

The most common expenditures for the Society are the publication of this newsletter and the maintenance cost of our website. In recent years we have contributed to the North Pownal Congregational Church, Pownal Center Community Church, and the Pownal Methodist Church for use their of facilities for open meetings; paid annual membership dues to the Vermont Historical Society and the Green Mountain Folklore Society; rented a tent and paid costs to summer speakers; donated a flag, flagpole, and plaque to the Pownal Elementary School; contributed to the Library Building Fund; paid the required fees for the Tunbridge History Fair; and miscellaneous other costs. Refreshments at events have been donated by Board members.

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Board Members:
Ted Atkinson
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Margaret Lilley
Jeanne Overstreet
Raymond Rodrigues



Signature of Thomas Pownall,
Governor of the Massachusetts Bay
Colony, after whom Pownal is
named.

Our Goals:

- Raise public awareness of Pownal's history: its founding fathers and its early inhabitants;
- 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.