



Pownal Gateway

Pownal Historical Society, Inc.

March 2008

Vol. 6 No. 4



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Upcoming Meetings

April 20. 1 p.m.--Our Annual Meeting

(Solomon Wright Public Library)

Saturday, April 26

9:00 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Vermont Archaeology Society

(Bennington Museum)

May 17, Vermont Geological Society

(Bennington Museum)

Reenactors Enthusiastic about Their Hobby

Mary Ann Stickney and

Ed Miano described the clothes they wear, the equipment they carry, and what it is like to be a re-enactor of the American Revolution at our Society's March 2nd meeting. Dressed as a militiaman and as a camp follower, Miano and Stickney shared their knowledge and excitement at having participated in 17 different reenactments this past year. Each has been a reenactor for about ten years.



Miano dresses in a combination of civilian and military garb, attempting to capture how a volunteer between the years 1775 and 1777 would have dressed, such as a woolen great coat and "splatter-dashes," the early version of gaiters. Miano carries a variety of gear with him, including a ramrod puller, cleaning tools for his musket, extra gunflints, and a cartridge box. He explained that soldiers in those days carried cartridges prepared in advance, rather than carrying black powder in powder horns.

Stickney dresses as a lower class woman, one who would have worn linen clothes such as a basic shift, two petticoats, and a cap. "Camp followers," according to Stickney, were not what we might consider them today: prostitutes who followed the soldiers. Rather, they fulfilled a variety of important functions ranging from laundress to cook to nurse. Since most were poor, often widows or refugees from the fighting, they had to obey the military rules or risk being forced away from employment. Stickney showed a cookbook with 18th Century recipes and original 18th Century clothing that she had found in lawn sales.

Audience members then viewed a video of the Battle of Saratoga, during which Miano and Stickney answered questions about why they enjoy reenacting, how each battle is choreographed to be as historically accurate as possible, and what kinds of food they eat in the field. Miano explained that they camp and live in the field on weekends during reenactments, not merely reenacting battles, but also reenacting life as it was lived on campaigns.

250 Years of Agriculture

At our January meeting, Dr. Hank Art, the Director of the Williams College Hopkins Forest, discussed some results from his research into farming practices in southern Vermont and the Berkshires. His illustrated lecture included the 1830 J. Mills map of Williamstown, which indicated that most of the land at that time was cleared, the rest wood lots, with grazing reaching up to the crest of the Taconics.

Among his findings, milk production in Bennington County increased after the Civil War, often shipped long distances in iced rail cars. The raising of Merino sheep, introduced early in the 19th Century, declined by 1900 as a result of competition from Australia, which could produce and ship wool at a lower cost. After the Civil War, Vermont farmers mostly grew wheat, barley, and oats, but the production of those declined after World War I.

During the first two-thirds of the 19th Century, maple syrup was converted into maple sugar. It was only in the late 19th Century that the production shifted to syrup itself. Most astounding to Dr. Art, around 1900 the Williamstown area was one of three top three vegetable producing areas in Massachusetts, with corn, squash, cabbage, and tomatoes being the most common crops.

The use of horses in southern Vermont and the Berkshires began to decline by 1900, with tractors taking over in the 1930's. By then, the number of farms had declined precipitously, with the average acreage per farm growing substantially as small farmers were bought out by people able to afford larger land holdings.

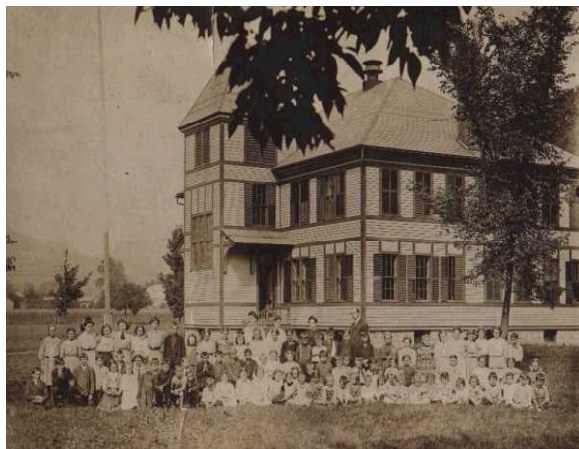
Asked for the primary reasons for the depletion of the soil during the early and mid-19th Century, Dr. Art replied that it was a combination of stripping trees from the hillsides and excessive farming in the shallow soils. In fact, he was a bit surprised that the mass exodus from Vermont during that period was not larger, for the hill farms had ceased to be very productive.

Elementary School History Project Help Needed by Joyce Held

Wanted: Stories, memories, and pictures of any of Pownal's schools. This is for a book writing project for the 4th grade class at Pownal Elementary School sponsored by the Pownal Historical Society. If you have any material (school book, bell, ruler, photos, *etc.*) from the "golden" school days of Pownal, we encourage you to share them. We would be happy to scan any photos you have of the Pownal schools and return the originals to you. Also, if you would like to visit with the 4th grade class this spring and talk about how school used to be in Pownal, we would love to hear from you. Please call Joyce and Ken Held at 802-823-5536. We thank you for sharing with our school children.

NORTH POWNAL
GRADED SCHOOL,
1909

ON PAGE ONE:
OAK HILL SCHOOL



Upcoming Meetings

Sunday, April 20, Annual Meeting, Solomon Wright Public Library--1 p.m., business meeting for all members; 2 p.m. Speaker: Peter Hopkins, "History Discovered in the Crane Paper Company Archives." Peter will talk about some of the more interesting items he has found in the archives and may also tell us a little about the Pownal Community Garden.

Saturday, April 26 – Vermont Archaeology--9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bennington Museum

On this date, the Vermont Archaeological Society will hold its annual spring statewide meeting at the Bennington Museum. Speakers from across New England will address a variety of archaeological topics relevant to Vermont. For registration information, go to: <http://www.vtarchaeology.org/cms/events>

Pre-registration for the Spring meeting is \$20 for VAS members and \$24 for non-members. Fee includes morning coffee & bagels and lunch (varied meat and veggie sandwiches, salad, cookie, & drinks). Registration must be received at least one week before the meeting date to reserve lunch. On-site registration is 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

May 17, Genealogical Society of Vermont, Bennington Museum. For more information, go to: <http://www.genealogyvermont.org/upcoming.htm>

Vermont Barn Census, date TBA: The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation wants to conduct a census of all barns in Vermont on one weekend. To participate, go to: <http://www.historicvermont.org/programs/barn%20census.htm> or call Debra Sayers at 802-828-3213. There will be a workshop in late May or early June.

Tracing Your Family Line, Part II

by Ted Atkinson

Good magazines are educational for the beginner because they show the reader how to attack a problem. The two I like best are *The American Genealogist (TAG)* and the *New England Register* of the New England Genealogical Society. Both are monthlies, both may be found in the Bennington and Pittsfield libraries, and *The Register* has been published since the 1840s. *TAG* deals mainly with 17th Century problems and family lines, with the authors usually Fellows of the American Society of Genealogists.

Some authors in these magazines are "Certified Genealogists," who have had their work samples evaluated and approved by the Board for Certification of Genealogists. As opposed to Certified Genealogists, "Professional Genealogists" may be self-educated. Both will charge fees for their work.

The number of professional researchers has decreased in recent years, perhaps because of the ready availability of online genealogy sites. However, the online sources can't cover everything. In Vermont there are 251 towns whose Town Clerks have access to probate (wills) records, deeds, gravestones, and town meeting minutes.

Locally, Charles Clark and I can help you with your research. At the Bennington Library, Tyler Resch or Bill Budde can help. The National Archives in Pittsfield conducts regular free workshops. For their schedule, go to: <http://www.archives.gov/northeast/pittsfield/public/workshops.html>



7/6/1882, Pownal: John Moor[sic] is enjoying himself hugely with his sons who are herding cattle in Texas. When asked if he was going to Pownal this summer, he said: - "No Sir, No, Sir, No Sir, Never."

12/20/1883, Pownal: The Mooar boys - Wright and John - own three ranches in Colorado, Texas, two cattle and one boarding ranch. Mrs. Mooar has lately joined her husband who has been with the boys, and the family are all there now with the exception of Fannie. The boys have lately offered the town \$5000, and land on which to erect a school house.

5/26/1887, Pownal: John Mooar and his wife, after some six years of residence with their sons in Texas, again are residents of our village to their old home.

9/16/1880, Pownal: A. G. Parker, republican, was elected town representative by 92 majority. The following are elected justices of the peace: Wm. B. Blanchard, Alanson Lincoln, Othniel Towslee, Perry H. Thompson, Marcus Burrington, Daniel F. Bates, Amasa Thompson. If there are to be seven justices only, as usual, the above named are elected. If ten justices can be had under the new census these names can be added: Wm. H. Matson, Chauncy Rosenburgh, Charles H. Greenslet. The first three named are republicans, the next four are democrats, and the last three (in case of ten justices) are republicans.

12/2/1880, Pownal: The funeral of S. L. Gardner, Esq., found dead near his residence, was conducted at Pownal Centre Sunday, morning. Mr. Gardner was the son of Capt. David Gardner, deceased, an old resident of Pownal, and brother of Hon. A. B. Gardner of Bennington. His sons arrived from the far west to attend the funeral.

7/19/1883, Pownal: S. Wright, Jr. by hard study gained considerable time at the graded school at Bennington and graduated valedictorian of his class. He will enter Williams College this fall.

4/22/1886, Pownal: A very correct and fine oil painting of the grandmother of J. W. Wright has just been finished for him by Mrs. G. A. Archer of Blackinton. Many of Mr. Wright's friends who were personally acquainted with the subject of the picture have seen it and are warm in their praise of the perfect rendering of every feature.

7/14/1887, Pownal: Mrs. Abram Fowler of the Centre, entered the barn to give some water to a horse, when the beast sprang upon her, breaking her leg, severely injuring her side and inflicting hideous scalp wounds. At present she is on the gain.

8/25/1887, Pownal: Lyman Bass, an old man, received a severe injury from a sheep which knocked him down.

4/26/1888, Pownal: The schools were opened last Monday. Dr. Barber held teacher examinations at North Pownal Saturday. The following will be teachers for the spring term, not before mentioned: No. 2, Bush Grady, No. 3, Miss Pratt, Miss Mara Laws, Miss Julia Perkins, No. 4, Miss Fleda Niles, No. 6, Elida Merchant, No. 7, Miss Laura Morgan, No. 8, Miss Stella Mattison, No. 12, Miss Rhoda Mason, No. 23, Miss Georgiana Thompson, No. 14, Miss Mary Mason.

10/25/1888, Pownal: The old Capt. David Gardner house has been taken down by A. B. Gardner, who erected a beautiful dwelling on its site.



Richard Haskins, Green Mountain Boy



Martha Rudd contributed “The Richard Haskins Story,” by Orin L. Ray. Haskins is one of Martha’s ancestors. Below is an excerpt from the complete story, recounting what it was like just before the attack on Fort Ticonderoga (rjr):

The 8th of May, 1775 was pleasant and clear in the morning. Toward noon random clouds were scudding across the sky. By three o’clock in the afternoon a storm of lightning and thunder accompanied by a little rain broke upon us in all its fury.

We had left Castleton at ten o’clock in the morning. Every man of us except a few of the officers, had a trusty fire lock with spontoon[?], knapsack, cartridge box, and three dozen rounds of ammunition. Our cartridges had been prepared, and bullets moulded by our own hands. We had several wagons, and some of the officers had horses. These they sometimes rode and the other times passed over to be used by others more weary than themselves. But Ethan Allen made most of the distance on foot. He was a man of powerful build, of supple limb and great endurance. He was considerably above six feet in height; he had strong lungs, which at times he used freely to encourage us on our mission

By four o’clock in the afternoon we reached the plains north of the place where the village of Benson now stands. A little rain was falling; the air was full of quick lightnings and the earth shook with loud and frequent thunder Old Ethan was in the lead and on horseback. Suddenly a strike of lightning shivered the oak, and half its trunk lay in fragments in the surrounding woods. Allen shouted at the top of his voice: “Great God! That’s a good one! Take the old pine next!” Instantly following the utterance of these words, a fiery bolt, blinding and shocking us all by the terrible concussion, ran down the pine and forty feet of the top lay prostrate across the path in our front. Again Allen, rises to his full height in the stirrups, and lifting his broad sword upward to his right hand, exclaimed in steptorian tones, “God Almighty! That was grandly done; now try Old Ethan, he’ll stand you a back!” I shuddered from head to foot, for such were my views of that avenging power, and such my superstitious notions of the supernatural then, that I expected a bolt to strike our leader for his blasphemy and this defiant order to the Almighty. But a profound silence succeeded. The rain ceased, not another thunder note peaked, not another flash illumined the sky. Our reverence for our leader was strengnthened; our courage and hope of success more animated. We believed Ethan the vicegeveet[?] of Heaven who would lead us to victory.

[Ed. Note: Orin Ray appears to question spontoon and vicegeveet in Haskins’ account. A spontoon was a lance used by some officers for signaling maneuvers on the battlefield, so “bayonet” would have been more accurate. “Vicegeveet” does not exist as word, but the recorder may have misheard the word “vice-regent.”]

Brown Sugar Icing From “The Best in Cooking in Southern Vermont,” North Pownal Congregational Women’s Fellowship, here’s a recipe from our own Frances Lampman: 2 c. brown sugar, 2/3 cup milk, 3 Tbsp. butter, 1/2 tsp. vanilla, and 1 c. nut meats. Cook about 15 minutes. (discovered by Joyce Held)




Pownal's 250th Anniversary and You!

Time going by faster than ever? Looking forward to the future? Here's our invitation to join with community friends and neighbors in planning and celebrating our 250th anniversary in the year 2010.

The Historical Society Board has brainstormed a bunch of activities we could have throughout 2010, but now we need your ideas and energy. Please let us know if there are any projects you'd like to plan, with others or by yourself. Call Ray Rodrigues at 802-823-0198 or write him at raymond_rodrigues@msn.com. Here are some of the things folks are thinking as possible, but this list is far from final:

Designation of Pownal Centre as an "Historic District";
A ceremony erecting an historic marker with a dedication by the governor;
An historic pageant, perhaps presented by Pownal Elementary School students;
A new publication on the history of Pownal;
Dances, potlucks, and picnics around town, in the fire stations, and elsewhere;
Readings by local authors;
An art show;
A parade;
A summer play by a regional theatre group;
Small groups working on their family genealogies;
An inventory of historic (anything over 50 years old) homes and barns;
And . . . well, what do you think would be fun to do?

Talk to your friends, neighbors, church group, senior citizen group, volunteer firemen, kids, cat, grandparents, Select Board members, town constable, teachers, and anybody you can grab ahold of. We'd like to see the entire town involved, not just Historical Society members. Then let Ray or any of the other Board members listed below know what you think (well, not everything you think--just ideas about how you'd like to help all of us celebrate 250 years of living in Pownal).

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Board Members Ted Atkinson, Programs Charles Clark Joyce Held Margaret Lillie Jeanne Overstreet, Membership Raymond Rodrigues, Newsletter Website: www.pownal.org E-mail: pownal@comcast.net Wiki: http://pownal.pbwiki.com		
	Thomas Pownall	

