

ANNUAL REPORT – September, 2009

Worcester, Vermont Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 329
Worcester, VT 05682

The purpose of the Worcester Historical Society (WHS) is to conserve the unique story of Worcester's past through education, preservation, and restoration for the benefit of our posterity. The Society's resources, collections, and archives will be used to communicate the historical and cultural legacy of Worcester and to maintain and foster our community's heritage.

The WHS was incorporated in November, 2001.

The WHS meets at the Worcester Village School (now the WHS office and meeting facility) the 2nd Thursday of every month, at 7:00 p.m. The public is always welcome to attend.

Organizational

The Board is made up of nine Directors, elected by the Membership. Each Director serves for a two-year term, with staggering terms. The Board appoints its Officers annually.

The present nine Directors, appointed Officers, and their respective terms, are:

	<u>Term Expires</u>
Cliff Mullen, Acting President	September, 2010
Douglas Hull, Vice President	September, 2009
Judy Knapp, Treasurer	September, 2009
Elizabeth Schwartz, Secretary	September, 2009
Vivienne Adair	September, 2009
Bill Dodge	September, 2010
Terry Padilla	September, 2010
Harold Richardson	September, 2010
Betty White	September, 2010

At this year's Annual Meeting, the Membership will be asked to elect four Directors. The Nominating Committee of the Board will present its recommendations.

Membership Status

The WHS currently has a total of 75 members, made up of: 20 Individual memberships; 9 Family memberships; 46 Lifetime memberships. (Most Individual and Family memberships are due for renewal soon; **please renew your membership as soon as possible!** The Board tries to promote membership at all WHS programs, and many Town functions, including Town Meeting.

Annual dues of the members help to support the fiscal health of the WHS as we carry on our mission. The dues structure is as follows:

<u>Membership Type</u>	<u>Annual Dues (cover July 1 – June 30)</u>
Individual	\$10
Family	\$20
Life (individual only)	\$100
Business	\$100
Sponsor	\$500*
Patron	\$1000*
Benefactor	\$5000*

* Includes a lifetime membership and special recognition at the Annual Meeting.

Memberships may also be given as gifts.

Donations made in Memory of loved ones make very meaningful contributions to the Society.

Treasurer's Report

Please see page 7. (not included on website)

Last Year's Activities & Projects (September, 2008 – August, 2009)

- **Renovation of the WHS building**

One of our top priorities over the past year was the renovation of **the Worcester Village School** (also known as the White School). Michele Hill continued to lead the effort to have the **windows** and **chimney** repaired. The balance of the Grant from the Freeman Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont covered some of the window work: 4 basement and six full-size **windows** (those **in the worst shape**). Work began in August 2008 and was **completed in March 2009**. However, the chimney repairs, done by a Pres. Trust approved contractor, will be expensive, and will be delayed.

The ultimate goal of the renovations is to expand the role of the WHS building as a resource to the citizens of our town by utilizing it as the home of the Worcester Historical Society, where we can store our growing collection, and make that collection available to the public, for research, and through exhibits and programs.

- **Repair and Clean-up** after burst water pipes- an unexpected challenge occurred when the igniter switch on the furnace failed. David Book discovered the situation when he happened to stop in on New Year's Day. By mid-February the **heating system** was **repaired**, **baseboard heaters** were **replaced**, and a **sensor** which **activates a red light** (visible from the outside/ west side of the building) **if the temperature drops below** a set **limit** was **installed**. Thanks to WHS members, and especially to David Book, Bill Dodge, and Harold Richardson, for all their hard work. We received a check from **our insurance company** which **covered these repairs** - thanks to Doug Hull for submitting the claim.

Financial Support & Fundraising:

- We are grateful for the strong support of the WHS and our efforts to renovate the Village School on Town Meeting Day. A permanent budget item of **\$2,000 from the Town of Worcester** was approved.

Significant Fundraisers (discussed further under Projects & Programs section):

- **Town Meeting Lunch:** WHS served the meal on Town Meeting Day as a fundraiser. This was made possible through the very generous support of **Gretchen Saries** and **Greg Labarthe** of Bon Temps Gourmet.
- **Valentine card** fundraiser.
- **Love Light Tree** during the holidays.
- **The 4th of July: Chicken Barbecue, Quilt Raffle.**
- **Community Contra Dances** at Doty School.

Projects & Programs:

WHS continues to sponsor special programs and projects, to foster interest and offer information about the history of the town of Worcester. Over the past year, these included:

- **Annual Meeting Program** (Sept. 11, 2008) by **Don Wiedenmayer** on the **WWII Photographs he took** as a member of the 196th Signal Photo Company. A Potluck supper was followed by a short meeting, and then the excellent Program by Don Wiedenmayer, of Worcester. Attending were ~40 from Worcester and neighboring communities.
- **Outhouse Restoration Project-** it was removed from behind the Village School many (~50) years ago. Milton Pratt was still living. Jerry Nelson and Mark Foster did the restoration using as much of the original wood as possible. They moved it back to its former position behind the Village School (WHS building) just in time for the 2008 Annual Meeting. **Audrey Richardson read a poem that she wrote** to commemorate the return of the Outhouse.
- **Love Light Tree Lighting Ceremony** (Dec. 6, 2008): Audrey Richardson again organized this 3rd annual event. Generous donations of a tree (Audrey & Jim Richardson) and two wreaths for the front doors (Tom and Judy Lang of Balsam Acres) were much appreciated. Many lights were bought in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones. This meaningful evening was very successful; standing room only. The U-32 Camerata and Chorus entertained inside after the reading of names and lighting the tree. Refreshments were served.
- **Contra Dances** (January – Mud Season/April 2009): Four Community Contra Dances were held in Doty Gym, reviving a history of dances in town. Enthusiastic dancers of all ages participated. “The Parsnips,” a group of traditional musicians from Worcester and the surrounding area (two of whom are WHS members), played these family dances and split the proceeds from admission with the WHS. A special event accompanied one of the Contra Dances: March 14, 2009 **St. Patrick’s Day-theme/ Irish Ceili** - Irish Step Dancers, bagpiper Flora Jestice of Worcester, singers of Irish

ballads, traditional Irish music. Audience participation in learning the Irish Ceili dance, "The Rakes of Mallow".

- **Abraham Lincoln's 200th Birthday Observance** (Feb. 12, 2009): David Book gave a brief **talk about Lincoln** to students in the Doty School library, Dell Waterhouse **read The Gettysburg Address**, and then David **rang the bell at the Village School** at 2:12 pm. The Methodist Church bell rang also.
- The 3rd annual **Valentine Fundraiser** was successful once again. **Elaine Ladd Purpel** generously allowed us to scan Valentine postcards from the gorgeous collection of vintage cards which belonged to her mother, **Edna Ladd**, beloved Worcester teacher and long-time resident. In all, 265 Valentines were sent to friends, family, and former Worcester residents near and far. These efforts paid off as WHS received many **donations** in return.
- **Town Meeting Lunch:** Members of the WHS hosted the lunch at Town Meeting in March, with the entrees generously prepared and donated by **Bon Temps Gourmet (Gretchen Saries & Greg Labarthe)**, as a fundraiser for the Society. Thanks also to **The North Branch Grange** (for use of their coffee urn and beverage containers, silverware, condiments, etc.) and **Price Chopper** on the Barre-Montpelier Rd. for gift card donations.
- **Memorial Day Commemoration** (May 30, 2009- the actual Memorial Day): Audrey Richardson organized a commemoration of two World War II soldiers buried in the Worcester cemetery. Two buglers from Doty School (5th & 6th graders) played "Taps" beautifully, and WHS members David Book and Cliff Mullen gave moving speeches.
- **Ringing the bell to celebrate graduation of 6th graders:** a tradition (which began two years ago) on the final day of school. All Doty students gathered on the front lawn of the Village School as the members of the graduating 6th grade class each took a turn ringing the bell!
- **Energy Audit/Insulating our building:** Bill Dodge started the process by getting a quote on insulating the attic, then Vivienne Adair got quotes on having an energy audit. In late spring, Vivienne found out about a grant that might cover this from The **Vermont Community Climate Change Program** (20% matching required). She had the audit done and submitted the grant application. We just found out at the beginning of September that the **WHS was awarded a grant!**
- **Montpelier History Expo.** (June 20)- held in place of the Vermont History Expo, which didn't take place this year. The WHS had an exhibit with selected items and photographs from our collection; several publications were sold.
- **4th of July Celebration & Chicken Barbecue:** WHS members played an integral role in organizing and orchestrating Worcester's 4th of July Celebration. During the day, the Society served the traditional **chicken barbecue** (as a fundraiser), organized other fundraising activities (Duck Race), and presented exhibits ("**Worcester's Civil War Warriors**"; **Senter Family Memorabilia**; items from the **Maxham Store**). The day ended with a fabulous fireworks display, thanks in large part to **Suzanne Mancinelli**, who organized the **2nd Annual Mud Season Market and Community Day** in Doty Gym on April 25 to help fund the Fireworks (WHS donated publications and two individual memberships as part of the Silent Auction fundraiser), and the 4th of July Committee, which has been a subcommittee of the WHS for the past several years. Also, **thank you to the Worcester Volunteer Fire Department** for erecting

and taking down our flags that line Worcester Village Road; they have been doing this since our Bicentennial, and we would like to recognize them.

- **4th of July WHS Benefit Quilt Raffle:** This successful fundraiser was made possible through the generosity of WHS member, Cathy Hull, who made and donated a patriotic eagle pattern quilt.
- **Remembering Rafael Bettmann-Kerson and the Worcester Village Childcare Center** (Sept. 4, 2009): His mother, Sue Bettmann, hosted a gathering to install a granite stone at the foot of the apple tree planted in his memory, carved by her daughter, Sophie. Those with connections to the childcare center (formerly housed in the Village School) shared memories and apple pies made from apples from this tree.
- **WHS Collection of artifacts and documents** continues to expand. Thanks to Bill Dodge for arranging the transfer of the **old oak mail sorting cabinet** (made in 1948 and sent here new) from the Worcester Post Office to the WHS, and moving it into the first floor classroom. The Maxhams contributed **six unique items from the Maxham store** that stood across from the Town Hall. The Walter/Ladd families have contributed wonderful **pictures of the Ladd dairy farm** on Gould Hill, a **safe used by Joseph and Edna Ladd in that operation** and numerous items on loan. Again, thanks for these contributions to our collection.
- The **WHS website** (www.worcestervthistoricalsociety.org) continues to be an important communication tool. Many thanks to Susan Premo for creating, and maintaining, a web presence for the Worcester Historical Society. Our web page features upcoming events, information regarding membership, the Newsletters, Publications/merchandise offered by the Society, etc.
- **Semi-annual Newsletter:** The Society continues to publish a newsletter, now twice a year, to inform our membership of our activities. The newsletter is also posted on the WHS website.
- **Community newsletter, “The Grapevine”:** WHS is a collaborating organization, and Judy Knapp represents The Society as a reporter.

Things to watch for

Committees made up of Directors and interested community members will continue their work on **publications, archiving, programs, genealogy, oral history, facilities & grounds, & fundraising.** Here are some things to watch for:

- Look for **more programs**, at least quarterly, presented by WHS, during the coming year.
- **Inventory of the Worcester Cemetery:** led by David Book with support of the cemetery commission and Doug Hull.
- **Appraisal Day for antiques/collectibles** to be organized by Brad Senter.
- **Vermont Barn Census:** Photo inventory of old barns. Brad Senter is willing to chair.
- **Old Roads Project:** research Worcester’s old roads this winter.
- **Contra Dances- 2nd Saturday evenings** beginning in January and running through Mud Season. We look forward to holding them **upstairs in the Town Hall** now that renovations are complete! The Parsnips (musicians) appreciate having a regular venue with community involvement, and it is a fundraiser for WHS.

- **WHS is participating** in a project, led by Doug Hull, to **publish a book** on the **History of Worcester; first installment to be focused on Worcester's soldiers.**
- **Archiving** of historical photographs, documents, and artifacts will continue. We need help in this process – please let us know if you are interested!
- **Insulation work: funded in part** by a **grant** from the **Vermont Community Climate Change Program**
- **Restoration** work at the Village School. **Chimney repairs** targeted.
- **WHS Village School building: Open by appointment**, for now.
- Continued development and utilization of our **WHS website**: visit us at www.worcestervthistoricalsociety.org
- **Membership drive**: The WHS Board will continue to make an active effort to increase the membership of the Society. We count on members for financial support, but even more, to support the many projects and activities the WHS is undertaking in support of our mission, to communicate the historical and cultural legacy of Worcester, to maintain and foster our community's heritage. We welcome your support!

WHS Wish List

The following items are on our Wish List – please let us know if you would like to **contribute or donate!**

- LCD Projector
- National Register of Historic Places Plaque (it would be nice to get one for the Town Hall too)