



CONTENTS

Dedicated Footsteps	2
Muncy's Diner Remembered	4
<i>Essex & Essex Junction</i>	
Order Form	5
Short Stuff	7
Current Projects of the Essex	
Community Historical Society ..	7
1805 School House	
Replica Update	7
Upcoming Events	8
Board of Directors	8
Membership Form	9
Calendar of Events	10



The ECHO

The Newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont
Published twice a year,
spring and fall.

Fall 2004
Edited by Richard
and Lucille Allen

Layout by Sue Storey

Essex Community Historical Society
3 Browns River Road
Essex Jct., Vermont 05452
Internet address:
www.essex.org/esxhs/esxhsfindex.htm

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our society has enjoyed a busy and successful year. The annual meeting in October was held in the Kolvoord Room at the Brownell Library in Essex Jct. with Richard and Lucille Allen, our speakers. They talked about their newly published book, Essex and Essex Junction. Countless hours were devoted on their part to the book, which is our society's major fundraiser.

History Expo 2004, sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society, in Tunbridge invited our society to participate once again. Our display was on Fort Ethan Allen, with William Parkinson, one of our directors, showing many of his historical artifacts.

The water tower at the fort, which is owned by the Town of Essex and leased by the Champlain Water District, was opened to the public on a Saturday in June and September. Many people enjoyed a spectacular view from the top, as well as taking a guided walking tour of the fort with Doug Slaybaugh. William Parkinson opened the pump house to display his private Fort Ethan Allen collection.

Brochures for walking tours of the Town Common area and the Five Corners were completed this year by Sherry Norton, Polly McEwing and others. The inventory of historical buildings was updated and photographed as part of the historical aspect of the Town Plan. Our study was given to the Town of Essex Planning Committee to aid in their work.

The 1805 era schoolhouse renovation work, under the direction of Hubie Norton, continues as money becomes available for materials.

An updated computer and scanner were donated to aid in our cataloging of our collections. Gradually the artifacts are being identified and the records computerized for future reference.

Members of our society have donated many hours raising funds for projects and materials through tag sales and donations at the opening of the water tower. Special recognition and thanks are extended to the Town of Essex Selectboard, Recreation Department and other officials for financial support and other help.

We are looking forward to another successful Sing-a-Long in December under the auspices of the Recreation Department and our society.

The following members serve on our historical society board: Lucille Allen, Eva Clough, Ann Gray, Polly McEwing, Barbara Mudgett-Russell, Sherry Norton, William Parkinson, Katherine Reynolds, Clinton Russell, and Tobe Zalinger. Newly elected members are: Jacqueline Carr, Kathy Dodge, and Laurie Jordan.

*Respectfully submitted,
Clinton Russell*

Dedicated Footsteps: Door-to-Door Mail Delivery for Essex Junction

By George Clapp

Last June at our annual tag sale I was introduced to Mrs. George Willard.

Within a few minutes of meeting her, I asked her, "Would you mind being interviewed by our staff?"

Her immediate response was, "I wouldn't mind at all."

On October 13, 2003 Eva Clough and I interviewed Mrs. Willard at her log cabin on Osgood Hill Road in Essex. The interview centered on her husband, George Willard, who was hired by the post office to be part of the first home delivery system for the village of Essex Junction.

Prior to April, 1953 residents of Essex Junction had to go to the post office and get their mail. As a resident you had two choices: you could rent a postal box or you could have your mail placed in an open pigeon hole in the post office. The Essex Junction Post Office was located at 2 Railroad Street, where the Essex Agency Inc. is currently located, adjacent to AJ's Kitchen. The post office was located on the left hand side of the building.

In 1955 Charles Petrie built a new post office on Lincoln Street. It took the shape of a ranch style house and it was located across from the Brownell Library and Houghton's Maplehurst Flower Shop.

After World War II, Essex Junction's population was growing. The time for mail to be delivered to your home had arrived. The post office hired two people to accomplish this goal. Bernie Catella was postman # 1 and George Willard was postman # 2. These two brought mail door-to-door to the residents of Essex Junction for the first time on April 15, 1953. Harry



George Willard and his dog, Brownie, 1959.

Kingsley was hired as the substitute for George or Bernie, if they were sick.

This new job required working six days a week, and at Christmas time it also meant working Sundays. George's mail route was 15 miles in length. George would leave the post office, go up Pearl Street, School Street (both sides), around Curtis Avenue, South Summit Street, and up Prospect Street, Summit Street, the two Hillcrests, and then down Pearl Street and into Village Drive (at least two or three streets in there).

As Mrs. Willard told the story, I was really impressed by her love and devotion for her husband. At times when we were talking I could feel every footstep George took as described by his wife, Mary. When Mary learned how to drive she knew within five minutes where she could find George along his mail route. This was important because on days when it started to rain she would bring him his umbrella.

These men never missed a day. Regardless of the conditions, the mail was delivered. While making their rounds the residents had many different requests. On more than one occasion they were asked to move furniture for spring cleaning, or asked if they had seen a lost dog or cat. Returning home with sore or blistered feet was not uncommon. All of this was worth it because the people on their routes liked and respected them for the job they did, and the kindness they displayed.

George was creative. To help carry the heavy load of mail, he took a golf cart and converted it into a carrier that would help him deliver mail. By this time

the Willard's lived on 6 South Summit Street, which was part of the mail route. This proved to be invaluable when he had to use the rest room or have a snack along the way.

Things were about to change. In 1962 the Willards moved to Essex Town, on Osgood Hill Road. By that time, George had delivered mail door-to-door for fifteen years in Essex Junction. In 1968, when the rural delivery carrier Norman Muzzy passed away, George applied for the job. He purchased Mr. Muzzy's right hand drive vehicle and pursued a dream he had even before he had gotten married, to be a rural delivery carrier.

His route started at Upper Main Street, along Center Road, to Sand Hill Road and down Perry Drive and Lavigne Road, back to Jericho Road, to the Whitcomb Farm, down Naylor Road to Weed Road, back to Browns River Road and down Osgood Hill Road. He continued down Osgood Hill Road until he came back to Route 128 in Westford. He then would end up at the Westford Post Office, sort the mail, and return to the Essex Junction Post Office. The route was around fifty miles in length and all the mud you could handle at certain times of the year. This was George's mail route for the next twelve years.

It was rare for George to break a postal rule, but following in Norman Muzzy's footsteps, George would get out of his vehicle and hand deliver mail to two elderly ladies on his route. He did this because of the difficulty they both had in trying to walk to their mail boxes. One of the ladies lived just before the bridge and the other, Grandma "Gertie" Chates, lived just on the other side of the store in Westford.

In 1980, after twenty-seven years, the devoted postman decided to retire.



Bernard Catella dressed for cold weather mail delivery, c. 1953-1954.

As a resident you had two choices: you could rent a postal box or you could have your mail placed in an open pigeon hole in the post office.

On January 2, 2004 Eva Clough and I had the opportunity to interview Bernie Catella. He shared how he and George had started off delivering mail in civilian clothing because their postal uniforms hadn't arrived yet. Bernie's mom worked at a sewing factory in Burlington and made him a winter jacket, fur collar and all. Bernie had worked part time for the post office so he felt this is what gave him the edge when he was hired as the first postman. At 81 years old he can still recall the past with little difficulty. His route was around eleven miles, and he did his job for over nineteen years.

Most of Bernie's route consisted of Maple, Grant, and Jackson Street down by the village garage, Richard Street, Wrisley Court, Mansfield Ave., Pleasant Street, LaMoille, and Arlington. He managed to start the route with a full bag of mail and when he

reached the relay box, he would load up his bag for the rest of his route. This is what George Willard would do as well. Postal employee Doc Bingham's job was to get the mail to the relay boxes.

At some point the carriers were assigned jeeps to use for their routes. Both men were very proud of their vehicles. Mr. Catella said when you know everyone on your route and watch their children grow up, you become very close to the community. "That's the part I missed the most when I retired," he said.

I hope that when April 15 rolls around each year, you will remind your neighbors that that's the day, in 1953, when the residents of Essex Junction started to receive their mail at home, delivered by two postman with very "dedicated footsteps."

Author's note: I would like to thank Mrs. Eva Clough for helping me with the interviews.



Abbott Muncy and Mildred ("Mid") at their diner c. 1955.

Muncy's Diner Remembered

by Jean Muncy Leonard

In the early 1900s William and Dora Anderson owned and operated what was then called Anderson's lunch. They ran the business for 25 years. Their daughter, Mildred, worked for them all through her teens. When Mildred turned 21 and married Abbott Muncy in 1930 they bought the diner from her folks and changed the name to Muncy's Diner. The diner became quite famous for the homemade meals and for Mildred's homemade pies. They ran the diner for 42 years until Mildred passed away in 1972.

The diner was open seven days a week: 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. They had specials every day along with the a la carte menu and you could order either a whole meal or a half order. The older folks liked that...One of the

favorite meals was chicken and biscuits. We used to get several doctors with their families come from Burlington for chicken and biscuits on Sundays...Mom made fresh pies every day. Apple, raisin, cherry apricot, coconut custard, etc... Maple cream was the-e-e favorite.

We had quite a group of local men who had coffee every morning and a lot of village politicking went on. The diner was very small. Only 6 booths and 6 seats at the counter, but we really packed them in.

Editor's note: The diner was located on Main Street, next door to Phil Kolvoord's office. The spot is now a parking lot.

"...Muncy's was famous for the home-cooked food they served...and all the home-made pies, cakes, and especially cookies. I remember the nice cool water they served when you ordered, as it came down from the Allen Martin Reservoir in Essex Center, and it was good to drink...It was always a nice friendly place to eat, and with such a good cook and such good company that we often stopped there. They were open early and late, and breakfast was always new doughnuts or muffins..."

—Mert Sage, *The Essex Reporter*, February 16, 1989

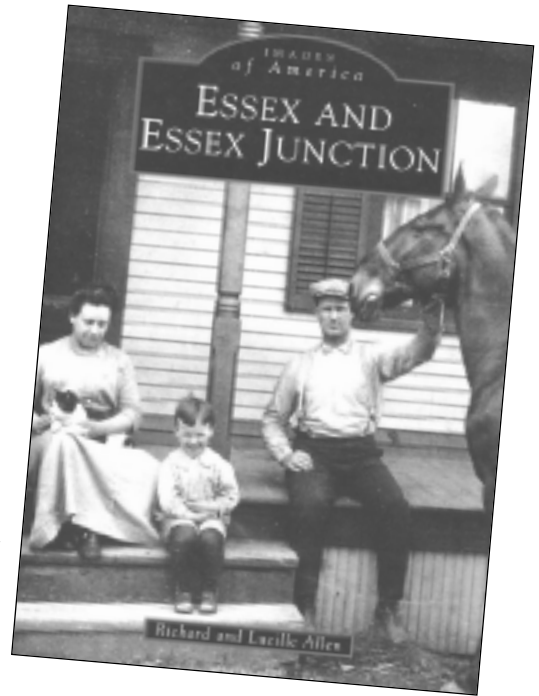
ESSEX AND ESSEX JUNCTION

by Richard and Lucille Allen

By purchasing this photographic history book through the historical society, you will support the work of the society in collecting, sharing and displaying Essex history. This is a major fund raiser for the society. *Thank you for your order.*

Check how you want to receive the book:

- Mail the book to me
- I will pick it up from a board member



Quantity	X	Cost of one book	=	Price
_____	X	\$19.99	=	_____
VT RESIDENTS ADD 6% SALES TAX				
(No tax if purchased by schools or libraries)				
(Tax per book is \$1.20)				
POSTAGE AND HANDLING				
(Charge for one book is \$2.50. For each additional book add \$.50)				
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED				
(Make checks out to Essex Community Historical Society)				

Name /Address:

Phone Number: _____

Mail Orders to: Essex Community Historical Society
3 Browns River Road
Essex Junction, Vermont 05452

SHORT STUFF

Please take a close look at your **address label**. The expiration date of your membership is noted. Three stars denote a life membership. You can use the form in this newsletter to update your membership.

We are now **charging for any research** that we do for people who request such assistance. For simple research we suggest a donation of \$10 to the historical society. If the research requires more time, is more detailed, and within our capacity, we will charge \$25 per hour.

Your editors are always looking for **interesting information and photographs** on Essex and Essex Junction history for our newsletter. We can scan original photographs and return them to the owners. Look through your old photographs. If you have a photo of the **Masonic Hall** on Main Street when it was being used as such, we'd love to have a copy. We welcome your contributions. Material can be mailed to the Essex Community Historical Society at 3 Browns River Road, Essex Jct., Vermont 05452.

The board of directors has recently approved a policy and fee schedule for the **reproduction of photographs** in the ECHS collection. A copy is available upon request.

Our fall **tag sale** on September 11 was a success. Thanks to all who donated items to sell, and to the volunteers who helped set up and sell on that date. We made about \$200. Save items for our spring tag sale.

The **water tower at Fort Ethan Allen** was opened to the public on September 25. Almost 120 people came by to get a view of the surrounding land and donated almost \$95 to the society.

New **donations/exhibits**. Eva Clough and Ron Clapp have set up an exhibit in the museum called "Dedicated Footsteps". Among the items on display are a postman's uniform, and a wooden letter sorter. See the article in this issue on postal delivery.

Wish list. We are seeking a donation of a working copier. Please contact any board member if you have one to donate. Thanks.

Copies of the Essex and Essex Junction book can be purchased at the Lincoln Inn in Essex Junction and All About Hair at 7 Jericho Road in Essex Center. Buying your books at these places also benefits the Historical Society. Thank you to Alex and Robert McEwing at the Lincoln Inn and Lisa Russin at All About Hair.



CURRENT PROJECTS OF THE ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Walking tour brochures. The walking tours brochures for Essex Junction and Essex are completed. Pick up a copy at either of the libraries, the Village or Town offices, or the museum and take the tour to learn about our community.

Century Home project. This project is nearly done. The committee has checked the list of historic houses provided them by the town and updated it by correcting house numbers, and noting structures that are gone. Soon a binder of photographs of each of these houses and their locations will be on display at the museum. There will be a place for comments to be added to each house listing.

1805 SCHOOL HOUSE REPLICA UPDATE

By Hubie Norton

Although the building currently on the Common by the cemetery was reportedly used for several purposes throughout its history, the primary goal is to renovate it as a replica of its supposed original use, a school house. The initial emphasis for this project has been to stabilize the building.

The main sill carrier beams have been replaced on two sides and a portion of a third side. These beams were rotten and structurally unsound having been in contact with the ground when the building was at its previous location. One of the floor joists had a broken tenon on one side and a bracket was fabricated and installed to bring this joist back into proper alignment and thus remove the floor sag. Missing knee braces have been installed to further stabilize the building and rotted door framing has also been replaced. The building has been plumbed and leveled and the deteriorated clapboards have been removed.

Work will continue on the building stabilization as some of the more recent "add-ons" are removed, wall cross members are placed and windows are framed. Most of this stabilization process has not resulted in much visible change. However, as the vertical siding is repaired or replaced in preparation for the final clapboard siding, and a planned dry stone foundation is also completed, we expect the character of the final product will begin to emerge.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sing-a-long Friday December 3, 2004 at 6:30 p.m.

Come join members of the historical society and the Town Parks and Recreation Department as we usher in the holiday season. Meet on the town Common in Essex Center for the tree lighting ceremony and sing-a-long. After the ceremony there will be refreshments served at the Essex Elementary School. If you need transportation, please phone any board member.

Vermont History Expo June 25 & 26, 2005 at Tunbridge fairgrounds, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Board of directors meetings
are at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month, except December.
The meetings are open to the public, so feel free to come.
We meet at the museum, except during the winter.
Call any board member for up to date information on the next meeting.

Essex Community Historical Society Board of Directors • 2004-2005 (denotes year of term expiration)

Clinton Russell, Jr., President (06)
58 Main Street
878-5887

Tobe Zalinger (07)
6 Browns River Road
879-1249

Eva Clough, Treasurer (05)
42 Brigham Hill Road
879-0849

Kathy Dodge(07)
PO Box 8264
Essex, VT 05451
878-4272

Lucille Allen, Secretary (05)
3 Oakwood Lane
878-3853

Laurie Jordan (07)
259 River Road
879-6467

Sherry Norton (07)
9 Maplelawn Drive
879-7334

Barbara Mudgett-Russell, Jr. (07)
58 Main Street
878-5887

Jacqueline Carr (07)
29 Maple Street
878-6766

Polly McEwing (06)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862

All addresses are
Essex Junction, VT
05452, except
where noted.

Katherine Reynolds (05)
88 Park Street
878-2193

Ann Gray (05), Vice President
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088

William Parkinson (06)
P.O. Box 40
Hinesburg 05461
482-3113

Essex Community Historical Society

3 Browns River Road
Essex Jct., Vermont 05452

Membership Form

Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership at this time.
Or you can pass this on to someone who would like to become a member.

Your dues will help us add to our collection of Essex memorabilia,
maintain the museum, publish the ECHO, and sponsor historical programs.

New member Renewal of membership

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

- Individual membership \$10.00
- Family membership \$15.00
- Senior membership (60 and over) \$5.00
- Individual-lifetime \$100.00

**Make checks payable to the Essex Community Historical Society.
Thank You.**

ECHO, Fall 2004



Calendar of Events

(SEE INSIDE FOR MORE
DETAILS)

December 3, 2004, Friday.

Tree lighting ceremony and sing-a-long
on the town Common
in Essex Center, 6:30 p.m.

**June 25-26, 2005,
Saturday and Sunday.**

Vermont History Exposition at the
Tunbridge fairgrounds, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

