



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ESSEX TOWN-EST.1763 ESSEX JCT.-EST1892 ESSEX COMM. HISTORICAL SOCIETY-EST.1991

CONTENTS

How Do You Put a Flat Top on a Round head? <i>Ray Yandow</i> <i>Remembers 43 years of cutting hair</i>	3
Short Stuff	6
Upcoming Events	6
The Collection Corner	7
Board of Directors	7
A Perspective on Postwar Essex Junction	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 2006
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

President's Message

The year 2006 has been busy. Our Board of Directors and our general membership have been responsible for many wonderful projects and activities.

Noah Thompson, author of the "A Pilot's Story", provided us with an evening program. Noah talked about his book and other World War II experiences.

We celebrated Essex's 243rd birthday this year. Essex was chartered on June 7th, 1763. We hope this becomes an annual event.

We opened the water tower at Fort Ethan Allen this spring and fall. We had 183 visitors in the spring.

Our spring tag sale was a great success. Many thanks to the people who donated items and others who stopped by and purchased them.

During the spring we interviewed nine individuals who worked at the Vermont Toy Farm or who had a relative who had worked there. The research that was conducted resulted in an article for our spring newsletter, and a display at our museum. This was also the program for the 15th annual meeting in October.

We participated in the Vermont History Expo at the Tunbridge Fair Grounds. Our display was on the Vermont Toy Farm which was located on Chapin Road. The manufacturing operation made dolls and European style Christmas tree ornaments for high end stores along the east coast.

In July, we participated in the Essex Junction Block Party. A fun time was had by all.

We updated our displays at the Essex Post Office. This allows us the opportunity to display our artifacts in the community outside of our museum.

A special thanks to the individuals working on restoring the 1805 school house. The school house will again be available for teaching youngsters about their Essex.

In October our partnership with the Essex Art League resulted in a very successful auction and show. Local artists used the theme of "Essex Views We See Daily" as their inspiration for the event.

Members of the society have kept the museum open to the public on Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons from June until October. This alone takes a lot of time and commitment by our members. They believe the community should have access to the many stories and artifacts in our museum.

As you can see the historical society doesn't lack in energy or creativity. We are proud of our community and will work hard to record and reflect her history.

Respectfully yours,
George Clapp
President



Historical society President George Clapp is shown introducing Barb Adams' second grade class to some of the artifacts at the museum on May 24, 2006. Mr. Clapp gives about four tours each school year to some of the second grades at the Essex Elementary School. Part of the tour includes a walk around the town commons area, and the second part is a visit to the museum. Similarly scout troops benefit from Mr. Clapp's expertise and interest in Essex history.



Essex resident Noah Thompson presented his experiences as a World War II pilot at the Brownell Library on May 24, 2006. Noah authored A Pilot's Story. The event was co-sponsored by the Brownell Library and the historical society.

How Do You Put a Flat Top on a Round Head?

Ray Yandow Remembers 43 Years of Cutting Hair

Interviewed by Laurie Jordan

Ray Yandow, the barber, will move to Florida soon, but he is taking his memories of Essex Junction with him. “I would never have dreamed that I would be working for a living on Railroad Avenue for forty-three years.”

Ray recalled, “Back in 1958 ... when I was a sophomore in Mrs. Reed’s civics class, she asked us to write a career paper on what we might want to do for work in the future and why. My choice was to be a barber because my older brother Bernard Yandow was a barber working in Essex Junction on Railroad Avenue and was doing well ... I thought this would be a nice job and much easier than being a farmer or working construction, so I wrote my paper on this subject.

“My brother worked up the street near the Tip Top News Stand. And right next door was another gentleman by the name of Bert Giroux. My brother worked for him for eight years; then he wanted to start his own business. So just about the time that I was getting ready to get out of high school, he said, ‘You go to barber school; and when you get out of barber school, we’ll time this just right and we’ll open up our own shop.’”

After his 1960 high school graduation, Ray went in the Vermont National Guards to do his army basic training, before entering Boston’s Massachusetts’ School of Barbering in the fall of 1961. “I came back and started in ’62. We opened up in January ... two doors down [towards Central St.] from our present location [8 Railroad Avenue]. Remember where Tom’s TV used to be? And we were there for two years.

“... The next store down was Ms. Stills, an older ladies garment store. ... my brother bought that building — where the TV place was, not where the restaurant is right now but just



Customer George Taylor is seen leaving X-Ray’s shop.

next door to Tip Top. Then around the corner ... the fourth barber shop was Kermit Chamberlain. Right over by Muncy’s. It was part of that big house that is now Kolvoord’s, the lawyers’ building. This was back in the late 60s early 70s.”

The barber shops did not have a lot of walk-ins from the train passengers, “because [rail travel] was decreasing all the time from the sixties on. The interstate system was getting better. And people were traveling by car more than they did by train. Slowly they’d take out another set of tracks ... ’cause it wasn’t being used. There’s only one set of tracks now.”

Ray Yandow on RR soot

“They had the water tower right at the other side ... between the cemetery and the tracks. The train would stop and get its water. Gravity fed right into the boiler. They burned coal.

And the black smoke — when it started to go — would go up and the soot would be all over the cars. If you left it there all day long; if you’d go like that. [He swiped his finger on the table.] You could get the black soot right off. The barber, Bert Giroux up the street, he always had nice cars. Always! ... Nice Pontiacs. And he used to be so upset. He’d park his car out there. Everyday he’d get black soot off that.”

that building — in 1964.

“We partitioned the main floor off to make two businesses — one the barber shop and on the other side was a second-hand store which was run by Bernard’s wife Sylvia.”

Imagine Railroad Avenue with Ray’s and Bernard’s barber shop being the second of three. “Four of them,” Ray corrected. “Tommy’s Barber Shop down almost near the train station, across the road from it. You know where Murray’s Tavern is — the opposite corner. Tommy [Blanchette] and Roger [Boozan] were there. Both Tommy and his brother Paul were barbers. The gentleman that my brother did work for still was there just

“In ’57 [IBM] came in.

They were young families. They had kids; they had boys. You know, that all perpetuated. Well, it was a good time. More growth. ... Well that’s what the nice thing is about IBM. I mean we had people come from Franklin County and everywhere. Some of them were even from New York State. And they had to come out of the IBM driveways, and then they had to come up through if they were going to Colchester or St. Albans or Swanton. And

they'd stop and get a haircut because their town didn't have a barber shop. Thanks to IBM, they contributed probably to, I would say, 85 — 90% of my retirement in my business. They supported me through the entire 43 years."

Ray worked five days a week, from 8:00 to 6:00, when he first started barbering with his brother Bernard in 1962. "And then we worked Saturdays 7:30 to 5:00 for a long, long time. I lost my Saturday; I didn't have a week-end for years ... maybe eight years. We were closed Thursday. And then we said, 'Let's get a week-end. Put something together ... so we have two days. So let's close Monday.' And Monday was a good day because it was the first day of the week. We hated to do it. But we said, 'We gotta have a week-end.'

"And we got together with Tommy and Bert. We always stayed good friends. We always had the same prices. We would not go up unless the other guy would go with us." The price of Ray's first haircut was "a buck and a quarter. We never felt as though we wanted to rip off the public, 'cause they're supporting us. And we'd go three years maybe, four years before we'd go up a quarter. ... So maybe the next step we'd do would be fifty cents. You know, and then the last few years if we'd go up at all, it was usually a dollar at a time.

"We had two chairs full time. The third chair was for a part-time barber on Saturday, because Saturday was a busy day. So the third guy that we had was Paul Blanchette. Initially he and his brother worked together for a short time. Then Paul decided that he didn't want to be barbering anymore so he went to the post office in Essex Junction. He eventually became postmaster. He was free Saturdays, so we would hire him for then.

"Business was so busy...that I took on another guy. And you even have to pay a little bit out of your pocket. You guarantee him so much, because you got too much business for two, but not quite



Ray Yandow's business card said "Your Coaches for Good Grooming."

enough for three. You can't grow a business by having people wait all day or half a day. You have to give them good service. There were three people there then. It picked up. And then when we got so busy with three, I put another chair in. So it worked out pretty nice."

Ten years later, like Paul Blanchette, Ray's brother decided to change his career to help his wife Sylvia with her second store. "They outgrew the other half of the building where we opened up. So they bought the farm where the second-hand store is on Route 15" next to the ballet studio [in Essex]. Consequently, Ray Yandow also had to make a career choice of whether he would change jobs.

"That's when I decided whether I'd buy the [barber shop] property

or not. I took my test and passed it to become a postal worker...What they wanted me to do was work part-time first, from 3:30 to 6:00. You pick up the mail at all the drop boxes around town. And then you work part-time on Saturday. Well, I worked in the barber shop Saturday and I [couldn't] pick up mail from 3:30 to 6:00 because I was working in the shop. So I couldn't do my part-time work.

You know, I was kind of thinking on getting hired [full-time]. So the situation arose that I could purchase Bernie's Barber Shop. It was right about the same time. And I decided to do that instead. I bought the business from my brother in 1972." The name was changed to Ray's Barber Shop.

"And then I hired my own people. And thirty-three years later... I started writing down names of the people that I had hired. I employed about twenty-one people" over those years. Some had stayed for a very short time such as one day, and some stayed a lot longer.

When Ray retired December 30, 2005, his two longtime employees, Patty Wells and Trish Cook, purchased his business and renamed it X-Rays Barber Shop. Now four women work there and Ray responded, "I know. I know. And they also say that we've gotta find a guy. And you gotta

Ray Yandow on Five Corners Traffic Dummy

"There were no traffic lights in Essex Junction that I remember at all. But there was a cement dummy right in the middle" of the intersection. "They called it a 'dummy'... It didn't at first, but as time went on it had a blinking yellow light on the top so you could see it. Everybody would come up in five different ways and stop on their own accord. And then they'd just go. It was safe to go. You allowed somebody to go ahead of you. And you just kind of went around it like that. It was kind of like the first round-about in a way.

You stayed to the right of it. It had a big base. Then it kind of went up at a little bit of an angle. Then another column and then another one that went up. It was pretty prominent—probably by the time it was done it was maybe eight feet to the top of the light."

Although Ray Yandow grew up in Williston and attended first grade at the Lamson School on Mountain View Road before the central village school, he regularly traveled through the Five Corners to high school.

find the right guy. Yes, they say that.

“Unisex shops. Sure, that’s what’s going to happen. Unless just somebody has to keep that same way of doing business. And never be anything different than a male shop for haircuts only. A lot of guys don’t want to go to a unisex shop. You know, they don’t want to go to a beauty shop and smell all the chemicals. And there’s even guys, excuse me for saying it, but they don’t want a woman cutting their hair. They just don’t.

“Sure!” Ray explained. “One thing that I always tried to do was not just have you and the customer—have dialogue between you. You kind of open up the whole shop for all the people so that you can be talking together about maybe one subject or another. About baseball or all sports for that matter. About hunting. Tell a few jokes ... politics, news of the day, and always about the weather.” Other popular subjects were “whatever there was current. It could be a merger in Essex Junction like it is right now ...” He laughed and added, “So you talk to this guy here, then somebody else kicks in. The other barber has something to say about it. Everybody’s talking about the same subject in the shop.”

The walls of Ray’s Barber Shop revealed his special interests. The walls look exactly like they did when he bought it. “I got that caribou named Harold. That’s from northern Canada. They were about 500 pounds. ... They had one of the largest antler structures of any animal. But I had no place for it. You can’t put it in a room with an eight foot ceiling. And I just don’t have any place like that. Even with my new place that I bought in Florida. So it’s going to stay there for now.” The fish from one of his customers is “going to stay there. He got it over in New York State. And he had it down in his cellar for — fifteen years or so — and nobody sees it down there. He said, ‘My wife doesn’t want it upstairs. You might as well have it.’ So the guy’s name is on it and where he caught it and whatnot. So it’s getting a little exposure.”

People knew that Ray collected bottles too. “I must have had four hundred or so. Bottles and cans. Different beers and sodas. And I had IBMers that went to Germany or wherever they go. I’d just say, ‘You know, if you’re going there, if you’re going to have a couple beers — drink them. Bring them back empty. Throw them in your suitcase.’ Something you can’t buy here.”

Ray’s ‘What Is It?’ items have continued to be collected and discussed among the customers, even beyond his retirement. Ray’s first father-in-law, Stanley Hathaway, “picked up trinkets that he didn’t know what they were even sometimes, at flea markets ... He’d give them to me and he’d say, ‘Hang this in your barber shop. See if anybody around — it’s a hundred years old — comes in there and

Ray Yandow on Phil’s store

At first, Phil’s cellar “was just storage for Phil. He just kept his shoes down there in boxes and he’d go down and you could hear him on the stairs. Then he’d come back up with a pair that might fit. They used to sell nice suits in there. Dress shirts. Soft hats. Top coats. That’s when people really dressed up. Most all of the IBMers. From ’62 to I’d say [to the early] eighties. They used to go with a shirt and tie. Everybody did. ... People don’t do that any more.”

might know what it is... Utensils or implements that couldn’t be too big because I didn’t have any place to put them. So that’s how it started; then people saw that and said, ‘Oh, I got something at home that you can hang up there.’ We had the chance of guessing first. Sometimes they would spend a whole haircut with people jabbing back and forth. They’d take it off the wall, hand it to this one. They’d look it over.”

Ray would even visit people if they were sick at home

or at the hospital. “You know, if I knew somebody was going in for an operation or something — an extended stay, I’d just say, ‘Give me a call. I’ll go to the hospital.’ Herm Carpenter ... he had a back operation and back then they kept you in bed for a long time. And I remember going and cutting his hair once. We’d roll him over sideways ... to cut that side of his head. Then roll him over the other way ... I went to their houses. I’ll tell you a story, come to think of it. About other people’s hair.

“I remember in the first grade [at Lamson School in Williston], I was quite impressed for some reason. The superintendent would come and visit. Well transposing back to that time and the age at which he was when I got to know him better, he was premature gray — and not just gray. He was almost a premature white hair...it was Albert Lawton. When I started cutting hair, he was a customer of my brother. So he became a customer of mine also. Got to know him quite well. The last probably six months of his life, he couldn’t get out. I’d go to his house and cut his hair in the kitchen. When you think about that: from first grade seeing this guy come to inspect your school, not knowing that you’re going to end up cutting his hair in the last few days of his life in his kitchen. It was kind of neat to do that sort of thing.”

Recently, Ray was buying fresh fruit at Adam’s Farm Market, on the same road as his first grade, when he met his sophomore civics teacher that he had forty-six years ago.

“Mrs. Reed said to me, ‘Hello Raymond. How are you today?’ And I said, ‘Fine. How are you Mrs. Reed?’ She said, ‘Fine. By the way, do you remember the subject of your career paper when you were in my class at Essex High?’ I said, ‘I sure do, and I did live up to what I said I wanted to do.’

“And she said, ‘You are one of the very few people who turned out to do actually what you thought you wanted to do.’ I was surprised that she knew who I was at that point. I guess I made an impression on someone even back then. I worked at that job on that same street — Railroad Avenue — for forty-three years. All happy ones.”

Thank you to George Clapp for helping Laurie with the interview.

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.

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. We welcome your contributions. Material can be mailed to the Essex Community Historical Society at 3 Browns River Road, Essex Jct., Vermont 05452. Or contact Richard and Lucille Allen at 878-3853.

Wish list. Digital camera, dress forms.

Copies of the book *Essex and Essex Junction* by Richard and Lucille Allen can be purchased at Five Corners Antiques, 11 Maple Street, Essex Junction. Buying your books here also benefits the historical society. Thank you to David and Nancy Booth at Five Corners Antiques.

We have several used copies of **Frank Bent's book, *The History of Essex, Vermont*** (copyright 1963) for sale at the museum for \$30 "as is." Most of these copies are missing the maps that came with the book. Contact any board member if you are interested in buying one.

Consider giving a **membership to the historical society as a holiday gift**. Use the enclosed form to do so.

We are looking for people who can **help us catalogue** our burgeoning collection. If you have an hour or more a week that you can spend helping us, please contact any board member.

Upcoming Events

The **holiday sing-a-long and tree lighting** will be held on Friday December 8 at 6:30 P.M. Meet at the Elementary School at 6:15 to walk together to the Town Common for the tree lighting and singing. Refreshments will be served at the Elementary School afterwards.

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.



Hubie Norton displays one of the photographs up for bid at the ECHS art auction on Saturday, October 14, 2006. Auctioneer George Goldring (r) volunteered his time and expertise to keep the action lively and entertaining.

ARTISTS AUCTION
ESSEX VIEWS WE SEE DAILY

Champlain Valley Exposition
Saturday, October 14, 2006
Auction begins @ 2pm
Hosted by the
Essex Community Historical Society

Preview/Direct Sales with Artists
Fri., Oct. 13th 4-7pm
Sat., Oct. 14th 12:30-2pm

For more info-879-0619

Cash or Check
payment only



The Collection Corner

Continuing Exhibit

You can still view the display of pictures and postcards of Essex Junction in the lobby of the Essex Post Office. This display was put together by Laurie Jordan and Eva Clough.

New Donations/Acquisitions

The following items were either donated or acquired:

- Two milk cans from the Johnson Brothers Creamery, and a book of train schedules found in the wall of her house, given by Sue Fleury

- Two display cases, given by Katherine Reynolds
- Shelving for the office walls, given by Dave and Eva Clough
- Souvenir pitcher, postcards, Holy Family Church booklet, photos of Butlers Corners School, given by Will Parkinson
- Photo for the museum display about the postal service, given by Mary Willard
- Research paper *A Bridge at Hubbel's Falls* written by Jerry Fox, given by Jerry Fox.

Thank you to these people

Essex Community Historical Society Board of Directors 2005-2006

(denotes year of term expiration)

Ron Clapp, President (07)
290 Whitewater Circle
Williston, VT 05495
879-0619

Katherine Reynolds (08)
88 Park Street
878-2193

Ann Gray, Vice President
(08)
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088

William Parkinson (09)
P.O. Box 40
Hinesburg, VT 05461
482-3113

Lucille Allen, Secretary
(08)
3 Oakwood Lane
878-3853

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

Eva Clough, Treasurer (08)
42 Brigham Hill Road
879-0849

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

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

Laurie Jordan (07)
259 River Road
879-6467

Sherry Norton (07)
9 Maplelawn Drive
879-7334

Kevin Laverty (09)
29 Tanglewood Dive
338-6455

Clinton Russell, Jr. (09)
58 Main Street
878-5887

Polly McEwing (09)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862

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

A Perspective on Postwar Essex Junction

Essex Junction Some 200 New Homes Constructed in Village in Past Three or Four Years

With the advent of the dial telephone system, Burlington and Essex Junction will no longer be separated by a toll charge.

This is still another indication of the growth of the community seven miles from Burlington which many now call "a suburb of Burlington."

The 1950 census listed the town as having a population of 2,701. In 1940 it was 1,901.

This means that the town gained 800 residents. The percentage of the gain is far larger than the 10% increase registered for the larger community, Burlington.

The southernly section of town, around South Summit Street, Cherry Street, and Curtis Avenue is the section with the most new dwellings.

New developments first began with the opening of 25 lots on South Summit Street in 1947.

Prices for new houses ranged from \$8,500 to \$12,000, with a few higher. A real estate dealer declared

that rentals are now about on a par with those in Burlington, but he thought the units more attractive for the comparative price levels.

For several years after the war, rents were noticeably lower.

It was estimated that businesses here absorb only about a fourth of the working population. The remainder commute for their livelihood.

One commuter complained of the deterioration of the road because of the increase in traffic.

A steady stream of cars moves over the road between 8 and 9 a.m. and between 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.

One farsided builder saw an increase in retail stores in the community to take care of trade that now centers in Burlington.

Advantages of the community quoted by former Burlingtonians were the attractiveness of the streets, the quiet atmosphere, larger lots, a feeling of small-town co-operation with neighbors, and excellence of schools.

The Suburban List
September 13, 1951

Ehler's 

We're open for business

1 1/2 miles from the
5 Corners in Essex
just on Route 15
Tel. 878-4907

- Kelly Springfield Tires
- General Repairs
- Official Inspection Station

We also would like to thank all our customers who have traded with us in the last six years at our old location on Pearl Street, to enable us to be going into our larger new station. We hope you will find it easy to visit us at our new location.

"Unusual new service station is this one on Vermont 15, between Essex Junction and Essex Center. Mr. and Mrs. Duke Ehler have converted the old Wright Bigelow barn into a station, which has been very busy since it opened two weeks ago. The Ehlers live in the house next to the station."

The Suburban List, November 5, 1970.

Editor's note: The barn has been torn down and replaced with a Maplefield's convenience store. Since 2002 Ehler's RV, located at the intersection of Route 15 and Route 289, has been owned by Peter Beauregard.

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.



Calendar of Events

(See inside
for more details)

Friday December 8, 2006
**Holiday sing-a-long
and tree lighting**

