

ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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The ECHO

The Newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont
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Spring 2010

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President's Message

The museum will open this spring on June 6, 2010. We will be having a scavenger hunt at the museum encouraging people attending to locate different artifacts that are on display. Tyson Valyou, music teacher at the Founders Memorial School, is bringing a string band to perform at our opening.

We will participate in the 2010 Vermont History Expo. "Back to the Land Again! Vermont Heritage Ways for Today" is the theme. Our display will be the evolution of Essex farms, and focuses on the Chapin farm in Essex.

We have purchased a new computer and printer for the museum making Polly McEwing's volunteer work of continuing to enter data about our collection into the computer much easier. Sherry Norton also continues to work on the cataloguing.

The ECI (Essex Classical Institute) is generously donating money to finish the outside work on a new roof and the siding for the 1805 schoolhouse. The initial donation of \$2,500 came from ECI for help in the restoration of this building. Many thanks to them.

After many years, Richard and Lucille Allen have decided to pass on the reins of producing and editing the ECHO newsletter. It is with much sadness and many thanks to them for all of their countless hours spent in helping ECHS preserve Essex history, and for their generosity in producing the ECHO newsletter for so many years. They will be greatly missed; a job worth doing is a job worth doing right. Thank you.

Eva Clough
President

Will Remembers the Turn of the Century — But Doesn't See Any Point in Turning Back the Clock

by Ruth W. Page

Will Wool was born in Essex Center on January 27, 1886, and can remember names, places, and even dates—give or take a year or two—for the past eighty years.

This made an interview with the popular neighbor, raconteur, and public servant a bit embarrassing, as this reporter can barely remember the highlights of what happened last week.

Will was born, he told us, in the house in the Center where Perry Towers lives now, and he went to school in what is now the 2-room White School, but was then a one room rural school.

"After that I went to another elementary school in Essex," he said, "but it burned down now."

Wool completed his education at the Essex Classical Institute, a facility for which he later became a Trustee.

At the turn of the century, Will and his brother Ralph went into business. They bought a milk

route from Clark Remington, and twice a day delivered milk in Essex village and at Fort Ethan Allen.

"We took the milk on a cart in big cans," Will says, "and then poured it into smaller, one-handled cans. People left their jars or cans out for us, and we filled them. Milk cost about four or five cents a quart in those days."

For nine years the brothers kept their milk route, purchasing tested milk (as required by the government) from Dr. Dan Johnson's farm (now Marvin Hts.) for sale to service families at the fort.

Then Dr. Johnson sold his farm, and Will

looked for other occupation.

At that time, he said, Essex Junction in its basic geography was not unlike what it is today: major streets were all there, and many buildings were the same.

Will said he could remember the fire in 1893 when the flatiron shaped building on the corner of Main and Railroad Streets burned down; the next year, Samuel Brownell erected the present Brownell block with its "1894" proudly set in a scallop of stone atop the edifice.

"You know, I think there was a flatiron building on your corner, too," Will said, referring to the Essex Publishing Company site across from the Brownell block. "Of course, those buildings weren't as big as the ones now."

Out in the Center, Will remembers when Wood's

apartments was a hotel ("it was a hotel a hundred and fifty years ago," he said. "Can you remember that?" we asked? "Easily," said Will). In fact, he



This is William Henry "Will" Wool as a young man. He was most notably remembered as a director of the Champlain Valley Fair and "host" of the horticulture building. Because he served as a town lister for 26 years, he had an encyclopedic knowledge of the local people and property. He served on the town school board, and as a trustee of Essex Classical Institute for more than 50 years.

added, he could just remember the death of Mr. Ferguson, then the hotel-keeper, about 75 years ago.

Other old buildings in the Center he mentioned included Municipal Manager Ed Lamb's home, which has been there many years, and the building where the new post office is housed, which used to be a store run by Thaddeus Fletcher.

Thaddeus Fletcher was the father of Mary Fletcher, who endowed the Burlington hospital which bears her name.

Reminiscing further, Will said he remembers the flood of 1927 clearly enough (he laughed at us for asking the question) but said it hadn't affected Essex much, though bridges were washed out and water was high.

"But I remember that it happened on a Thursday and Friday, and the water began to go down on Saturday. Sunday it was nice and sunny, and my brother and I were going to go to Stowe. When we got to the notch road, officers made us turn back-that was the only way the people had of getting out, and no one else was let through."

Getting back to Will's career, after he and his brother sold the milk route, Will went to work for the telephone company (that was 1912) as a repairman, and stayed in the job for nine years.

"I worked all around here-and in Jericho and Underhill and other towns-and I really got to know all the people in the area," Will told us.

He married in 1910, and Will and Stella had five daughters, and now have 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

After completing his work as phone repairman, Will came home and stuck to farming.

"I was just six months too old to be drafted in World War I," he said, "I had to register, but I was over thirty."

The Wools had a busy, if not a very large, farm, and kept thirty head of Jersey cattle.

All his life, Will has served his community in various ways. "I think it was about 1916 I was first elected to the School Board," he said, "and I can't remember exactly how many years I stayed on it, but it was too long; I was on during World

War I, because I remember we used the high school (formerly Essex Classical Institute) land to grow vegetables for the war effort. We had an agricultural course then, and the students made the farm."

For many years, Will was a Trustee of the Essex Classical Institute, and for thirty-nine years he served as President of its Board.

He is now a lister, and has served in that capacity for about 22 years; and in 1925, he was his Town Representative to the legislature.

One of Will's big interests has been the Champlain Valley Fair, which developed from a tiny inspiration of many years ago. Will remember it thus:

"Back in 1913, I was the first Fair Manager. It started just as a Grange meeting. We decided to have a Fair, just for one day. We used the Town Hall in Essex, and farmers brought their produce to show, and we had the horsemen come and lay out a track and we had races. It rained all day that first year, I remember.

"Then in 1921 we sold that place, and over the years the Champlain Valley Fair developed."

Will has been a director of the modern CV Fair for the past 14 years, has been in charge of the ever-larger exhibits in Horticulture Hall, and had much to do with the laying out of proper walk, grassy lawns, and fine flower beds.

He said that this year at the Fair a lady came to him who had turned up an old 1916 Premium list, so the Fair's history is not forgotten. When he had an active dairy farm, Will used to show his own cattle at the Fair, and even during the years when he did not serve in any official capacity. "I was always there as a visitor," he says.

Asked whether he'd like to see a return to the good, old horse and buggy days Will looked a bit taken aback, then replied, "I'm enjoying life the way it is now. I try to keep people happy, and I'm happy myself."

Suburban List, September 9, 1966, section one, page 9.

An Essex Remembrance: Sugar on Snow Party

by Fred Sole

Our Methodist Youth Fellowship was called MYF. As teenagers, it took too much time to say "Methodist Youth Fellowship" when we were talking amongst ourselves and everyone knew what you were talking about anyway when you said MYF or youth fellowship. Our MYF was not a large group. Most times there were between 6 to 12 of us (Donna, Danny, Ray, Kathy, Earle, Linda, David, Fred, Larry, Pam, Sylvia and others whose names escape me at the moment) at a meeting.

At some point at one of our Sunday evening MYF meetings, we voted to have a sugar on snow party as one of our winter activities. Danny had talked with his parents about having it at their sugarhouse and they had said OK. The party probably was set for a Saturday night. And the time would have been in March (1961) when the maple sap was running due to the warmer days and cold nights.

Danny lived on the Chapin Road about a mile and a half from the church which was in the center of Essex Center. His folk's sugar orchard and sugarhouse were on the north side of the road across from their house, dairy farm and apple orchard which sat on the south side of the road. The sugarhouse was far enough off the road back in the trees so you couldn't see it from the road.

So on the selected night we arrived at Danny's house and started out for the sugarhouse. There was a large field we had to walk across that sloped upward to a hill where the maple trees and the sugarhouse was. After supper the ten minute walk was in the dark. There was still plenty of snow on the ground then and still cold enough so you had to dress warmly and wear boots. I don't remember much more about the walk to the sugarhouse except once you got across the field you had to walk through the woods a ways before you reached the sugarhouse and it was fun to be with your friends.

We arrived at the sugarhouse and went in the door. The inside was dimly lit, I think, by kerosene lanterns and there was steam rising from the boiling sap. The aroma of the wood smoke from the fire whooshing under the boiling pan and the soft, hushing sound

of the boiling sap was so wonderful. It is one of the nicest experiences I had as a youth and one I will never forget. Of course an essential ingredient to being a memorable experience was the friends I was with. Take that away and it still would have been interesting but would have lacked the warmth that only friends and loving parents can add to the occasion and loving parents there were.

When we walked in the door, Danny's mother was there boiling a saucepan full of maple syrup on a separate stove in the sugarhouse to prepare it for the sugar on snow. I believe Danny's father (or someone Danny's father had assigned to the task if he was doing chores still) was also there stoking the fire under the pan. The other ingredients for a sugar on snow party, doughnuts and sour pickles, were there. Also, someone had gathered some snow and packed it in cake pans ready for us to use.

So Danny's mother boiled the syrup until it was ready to be put on the snow. I believe she tested it periodically by letting a drop fall in a glass of water. When the drop formed a ball in the water, the syrup was ready to put on the snow.

We each were given a cup of the boiled syrup and a fork. The process was, pour a little syrup from the cup onto the snow packed in the cake pan. Let it harden 'til it was like taffy. Then take the fork and pick the hardened syrup out of the snow winding it on the fork as necessary and then eating it like taffy from the fork – cool, sweet, delicious, no other taste like it!

After repeating the process for a few times (or mouthfuls so to speak), it was time for a sour pickle. After eating the sour pickle, you could easily tolerate some more mouthfuls of the sweet sugar on snow. Combine eating a doughnut or two while doing this and you had experienced something very enjoyable and special. At the time I did not realize it, but, probably few people in this world have or will ever experience such an enjoyable and friendly sugar on snow party. How thankful I am for those friends and their parents who provided us with a memory and experience I shall always cherish!

After everyone had had their fill of the sugar on snow, I don't recall exactly what we did. We may have gone to Danny and Sylvia's house back down the hill to listen to some records for a while before going home such as the Smothers Brothers or the latest Bill Cosby record, but I am not sure. It may have been another time we did that.

If you have a chance to visit an old fashioned wood burning sugarhouse in full operation, don't pass it up!

Upcoming Events

Saturday May 22 1:30 p.m., Old Brick Church, Williston

Smith Wright, Williston Businessman, and the Development of North Williston

Historical slide show presentation by Richard Allen, with walking tour of North Williston to follow. Parking in back of the church.

Sponsored by the Williston Historical Society, with research funding from the Chittenden County Historical Society.

Call Richard Allen for more information, 878-3853.

Saturday May 29 10:00 a.m. Essex Junction. Memorial Day Parade

Sunday June 6 1:00-4:00 p.m. Grand opening of the museum for the season.

The museum will be open on Sundays until Columbus Day in October.

The museum will also be open Thursday evenings 7:00-8:30 p.m. up to Labor Day.

**Saturday June 26, and Sunday June 27 10:00 a.m-5:00 p.m.
Tunbridge Fairgrounds
Tunbridge. Vermont History Expo**

The Essex Community Historical Society display this year will be about the Chapin Farm. This exhibit will examine, over a period of 140 years, the life, times, and changes of this farm in Essex Town.

The exhibit will focus on the changes of this farm, like any number of Vermont dairy farms then and now. In the 1870s the farm started as a small subsistence dairy farm. Dairy products (milk, butter, and cheese) remained the largest income producer for over 100 years through the 1970s. Other farming income has come from maple sugaring, logging, raising Morgan horses, and growing corn for a local canning factory.

Today there is an apple orchard, and a small Christmas tree business.

**Saturday July 17 4:00-9:00 p.m. Railroad Avenue
Essex Junction. Essex Junction Block Party**

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. Call any board member for up to date information on the next meeting.

1949 Advertisement

STOCK UP FOR JULY 4th

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HOLIDAY WEEK-END SPECIALS

Picnic Cold Meats lb. 45c

Skinless Frankfurts . . . lb. 45c

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(Contents Only)

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RUPPERT

or

BALLENTINE

NARRAGANSETT

ALE

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6

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FOR

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T-Bone Steak lb. 69c

Porter House Steak . . . lb. 69c

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— Complete Line of Produce —

TOMATOES — LETTUCE — CELERY — LEMONS

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**Your Money Will Buy More at the
COUNTRY STORE**



Alice & Carmi Ryan Celebrate their 50th Anniversary in 1961

by Laurie Jordan

Carmi Ryan was Essex Center's home delivery meat man for many years, delivering to his loyal customers from North and South Hero to Colchester, Burlington, and Essex areas. Carmi's niece, Nancy Bartlett of Essex Junction, well remembers the five years that she and her mother, Bertha Nichols (sister to Carmi), lived with them during WWII. Nancy's dad had to be in Connecticut. Nancy would ride with Carmi to make his deliveries up to the Champlain Islands. Among his customers, he serviced churches, schools, and camps. Along the way, somehow, he managed to rescue stray dogs. At one point, the Ryans had as many as four dogs at home. Their former residence is now occupied by the Bianchi Stone Crafters on Route 15, Essex Center.

Photo by Betsy Melvin

Row at Essex Junction

On Friday last, Thomas J. Coon, William Allen and Elijah Kemp, three young gentlemen residing in Winooski, were at Essex Junction, and at Tyler's Hotel called for something to drink. Not getting what they wanted, they began to abuse a stranger who was stopping at the hotel, and finally knocked him down and otherwise maltreated him. They then broke open the bar, helped themselves to a jug of rum, got boisterous, and disturbed the public peace in divers (sic) ways.

After a night's rest at home, they repented, and went back to the Junction, and settled up with the stranger, and finding the Grand Juror, Mr. Tuttle, on the ground, preparing to prosecute, they signified their willingness to fix up the matter in any way he should say. In accordance with his invitation, Coon and Allen appeared before a justice Monday morning, pleading guilty to a charge of breaking the peace, and were fined ten dollars each, and costs, amounting in all to nearly \$27. Kemp did not keep his engagement, and is still at large.

Burlington Free Press, October 7, 1869, page 3



After eleven years of editing this newsletter, this issue will be our last. We have enjoyed learning about Essex history and bringing it to you twice a year. Thank you to all the people who have contributed articles, tidbits, photos, and remembrances. Please continue to support our historical society.

Lucille and Richard Allen

Essex Community Historical Society Board of Directors 2009-2010 (denotes year of term expiration)

Eva Clough, President (11)
42 Brigham Hill Road
879-0849

Sherry Norton, Vice President (10)
9 Maplelawn Drive
879-7334

Laurie Jordan, Secretary (10)
259 River Road
879-6467

Ann Gray, Treasurer (11)
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088

Barb Chapin (11)
129 Chapin Road
879-1145

Kathy Dodge (10)
PO Box 8264
Essex, VT 05451
878-4272

John Duby (11)
62 Learned Drive
Westford, VT 05494
879-1841

Tim Jerman (12)
41 South Hill Drive
878-2972

John Marsh (12)
35 South Summit Street
878-5238

Polly McEwing (12)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862

Katherine Reynolds (11)
88 Park Street
878-2193

William Parkinson (12)
P.O. Box 40
Hinesburg, VT 05461
482-3113



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

Short Stuff

Please take a close look at your **address label**. The expiration date of your membership is noted. 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 P.O. Box 8388, Essex, Vermont 05451.

Wish list. Digital camera, dress forms, Essex High School yearbooks, town reports. Also, a hand held pocket size, digital voice recorder.

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. You can also purchase books from any board member.

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

The first Thursday of each month, except during the winter, is a **work session** at the museum, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The following people/businesses have **donated** to the school house project:

ACE Hardware
Ron Lamell
Earle Matthews
Lowe's
Steve Bean
Aubuchon Hardware

Additional thanks to **David Booth from Five Corners Antiques** who keeps ECHS in mind when Essex memorabilia comes in, and occasionally lets one of the board members know of that in case we are interested.

The Collection Corner

New Donations/acquisitions:

- Glass fronted **bookshelf**, and tri-fold felt covered display board, by EBPA.
- Purchased the *1877 Grand List for the Town of Essex*, by ECHS. This has records of landowners, buildings, parcels, and taxes.
- Purchased two **greeting postcards** with Essex Center written on the front and one with Z. Farrand's address, from Laurie Jordan.
- Donation of a **mannequin**, by Eva and David Clough.
- Donation of an **Ethan Allen Creamery** quart milk bottle, by Eva Clough.
- Purchased two 1900 Essex Town **presidential ballots** with Democrat, Republican, Peoples' Party, Vermont representative, and the clerk's signature.
- Donation of Catherine Wool's **graduation certificate**. It has her father William's signature on it as the principal, by Shirley Wool.
- Donation of a **photo** of John Duby's farm, house and outbuildings that was across the road from Price Chopper Store. Taken about 61 years ago. Also donated, an Essex print cloth **grain bag** which was used instead of burlap during WWII, and a **1932 family photo** of the Preventorium when the patients' school was attached to it on the side of the Grange Hall. Donated by John Duby.
- Donation of two large Essex Classical Institute **pictures** and one of farm equipment. **Articles** about The Artistic Alliance business and life, the town/village festivals from July 1959 and 1960, **town annual reports**, and a **photo** of what seems to be an Essex reunion group, by Betsy Melvin.
- Purchased two 1870s annual **town reports**.
- Given to ECHS, **bicentennial necklaces** (wooden coin on yarn), leftover from the fairgrounds' celebration, by Faye Soderberg.
- Donation of a **DVD** of Jerry Fox's railroad presentation at the Brownell Library, by Penny Pillsbury.
- Donation of a Christmas **wreath** to replace the one currently displayed at the museum at holiday time, by Saturn.

Thank you to these people.

Essex Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 8388

Essex, Vermont 05451

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

___ Lifetime: individual, married, civil union \$100.00

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

Thank You.

ECHO, Spring 2010

Essex Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 8388

Essex, Vermont 05451

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Renewal of membership

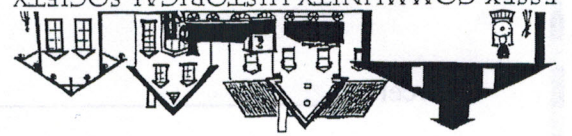
New member

Name

Essex, Vermont 05451

P.O. Box 8388

ESSEX TOWN-EST.1763 ESSEX ICH-EST.1892 ESSEX COMM. HISTORICAL SOCIETY-EST.1991



City State Zip Code

Phone Number

Calendar of Events

(See inside for more details)

Saturday May 22: North Williston presentation in Williston

Saturday May 29: Memorial Day Parade

Sunday June 6: Grand Opening of the Museum

Saturday June 26, and Sunday June 27: Vermont History Expo, Tunbridge

Saturday July 17: Essex Junction Block Party