

ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ECHO FALL 2023

It's hard to believe that we are already at the last quarter of 2023. After having so much rain this year we are now having at least a week of dry and sunny weather. Mother nature has not been our friend this year with all the rain that we have had which led to so much flooding in our beautiful state. Roads that we took for granted and many travel on every day had so much of them washed out and closed for days and in some cases weeks of not being able to get around.

We have had a busy summer with a lot of excitement. We have finally been able to complete Phase I of the Fort Ethan Allen Water Tower. Stewardship Slate of Burlington, Vermont were the contractors that did the work on the tower. We now have a new roof and the holes underneath on the roof were repaired, new screen framed windows in the very top of the tower to keep the pigeons out and new long windows around the sides of the tower. We also had enough money in our budget to replace the light on the top of the tower with a replica of the weather vane that was removed in the early 1900's. Now we are headed into Phase II.

We saved the old tiles from the roof of the tower and have them for sale. We are also lucky enough to have some local artists donating their time and painting pictures of the tower, fort and museum so that we can sell them and put the money toward Phase II to do more work on the tower.

Our 2024 calendar is finished and ready for sale. Many people were involved to make this happen, but mostly it is with the hard work of Art and Jan Kilmer who put in so

much time and effort to get the calendar ready for us to sell. All proceeds go to the water tower restoration fund.

Hubie Norton gave a talk on the 1805 school house. There was much interest in its history and how it got to where it sits today and all the work that has been done on it to preserve more of our history.

Will Parkinson gave a talk at our annual meeting about the fort and the water tower. There is always much interest in Fort Ethan Allen. At our annual meeting we welcomed back, Kathy Dodge as a board member and new board member Ron Russotti. Ron has been helping us with our Facebook page and is part of our policy committee. We gave Jerry Fox a life membership for the many countless hours that he has/ is putting in at the museum cataloguing our collection.

We also welcomed a group of 18 people from The Northwestern Counseling and Support Services that wanted a tour of our museum.

I would like to thank Ann Gray for the many hours that she has put in looking for and writing grants for the water tower. Many thanks go to Dennis Lutz for his encouragement and help on the water tower and Aaron Martin and Tom Yandow for their help and support getting the rest of the money for Phase I.

Thank you to the Town of Essex for supporting the repairs of the water tower and putting money into the budget towards the repairs. Now onto Phase II.

Eva Clough, President



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

P.O.Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451
ECHSVT@gmail.com

Albert F. Soule, Sr.

In late July, Stephen Goshorn reached out to us with a poem from a young soldier from Massachusetts who was training at Fort Ethan Allen in 1918.

Eva Clough replied to Stephen and asked if he thought the family of this soldier would mind if we shared his poem with our membership.

Eva received a reply from Lydia Shirley Banker, a Granddaughter of Albert F. Soule, Sr. Her message read. "I received this request from a fellow member of an organization I'm in, Vets Helping Vets Greenville. I think my grandfather and our whole family would be honored if you shared his poem in The ECHO."

I learned that Albert was born in Middleboro, Massachusetts on March 10, 1894.

In June of 1917 he registered for World War I, he was 23 years old. His trade was working a grain elevator. It was during this time that he spent 5 months at Fort Ethan Allen training for the cavalry.

He married Alberta Nancy in 1919.

In 1942 Albert registered for World War II.

Albert died in Middleboro, Massachusetts on March 14, 1980, he was 86 years old.



NEW COMMITTEE FORMING

The ECHS Board of Directors has voted to form a new Exhibit Committee. The duties of this committee will be:

1. Plan and set up a seasonal exhibit. This exhibit will change every year and can be tied to an event such as the 100th anniversary of the Champlain Valley Fair or the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage.
2. Plan and set up an exhibit of newly accession items. This exhibit will also change every year and will feature items donated during that year.
3. Plan and set up exhibits in display cases / on shelves. These exhibits will rotate on a 2-3 year basis with at least one of the exhibits being new each year. Each display should have a cohesive theme such as, but not limited to: history, businesses, home, farming or military related to the Town of Essex and City of Essex Junction.

Members of the Exhibit Committee do not have to be members of the Board. It is anticipated that the Committee would meet once a month from September-March to plan the exhibits and then more frequently in April / May to set up the exhibits prior to the June opening of the Museum.

Interested? Questions? Email echsvt@gmail.com

And Started On Our Way

*'Twas a bright and sunny morning
In the early part of May.
When we packed our few belongings
And started on our way.*

*In front of George Doane's store
We met, and numbered six.
And we were carried down to Plymouth
In Morse's Hudson six*

*We reported to the district board
And without the least hesitation,
They sent us to Fort Slocum
For our first inoculation.*

*Four days we were at Slocum
And were glad to get away.
For we couldn't stand the treatment
For another night and day.*

*In the early hours of morning,
May fifteenth was the date.
We arrived at Ethan Allen
Way up in Vermont State.*

*'Twas there that they accepted us
And to our great delight
Assigned us to the cavalry
To learn to ride and fight.*

*We all did like the cavalry
And soon did learn the game.
For we had one grand lieutenant,
Ed Thompson was his name.*

*Five months we were in the calvary,
Our training was nearly completed.
The orders came from overseas
That artillery was needed.*

*So on the sixteenth of October
We bid farewell to cavalry.
For we were ordered to Camp Jackson
As field artillery.*

*We put our whole soul into this,
And drilled with three inch guns.
For we expected very soon
To level them at the Hun.*

*But, alas, we were mistaken
For to our great surprise.
The Germans gave up the battle
And signed the Armistice.*

*We wish to pay our tribute
To those who fought in France.
We wanted to go over
But didn't get the chance.*

*Albert F. Soule, St.
1918*

MORE THAN A LIBRARY

BY LAURIE JORDAN

The Essex Center library began in a side room of the Memorial Hall, next to the town clerk's office and where town meetings were held. But I remember going inside the Essex Free Library which was built in 1933 at 3A Jericho Road where the current Essex Public Works Department is. I always looked up at the stuffed birds perched along the tops of the tall bookshelves around the room where Bernice Bixby checked out my books. The side room with children's chairs and a low table is where I found my picture books. We also walked down there from school on library day. My children continued to enjoy my Essex Free Library, but they could add events like a pet parade and summer reading lists when Susan Overfield was the librarian. In 1989 the town moved our library to the renovated old brick church across the road. The whole basement became the children's area. The spacious main part has stairs that lead to a balcony on three sides with even more books. An elevator was added. I can walk in there now and reminisce some more.

When I was in first grade at the little white school next door, I would walk over to the basement for hot lunch. In the mid-1950s the Catholic Church occupied the upstairs, and the PTA made the lunch while the eighth graders helped to serve it. Evans Knapp took several photos of my sister's older class at lunch. Recently, I entered the library's main floor with my sister who is eleven years older than me. She pointed out where the stage had been for her 1955 eighth grade graduation. Although many other programs (basketball, poetry contests, Memorial Day celebrations) took place in the Memorial Hall on Towers Road, she also remembers reciting poems in what is now the library. The renovated Essex Free Library has programs for crafts, speakers, and children's activities along with the plant and book sales on all three levels.

Speaking of renovations, a few years ago, the original foundation to the Essex Free Library was just fixed after the children's basement section flooded. I took a photo of the ditch around the field stones that had supported the first wooden structure built in 1803 for a town meeting place. When that burned, they kept the foundation and added the present brick structure in 1839. It was common for a town's intersection to have a cemetery, schoolhouse, and town hall/church. Town meetings were there until 1873.

The present Essex Free Library initially was a Congregational Church which operated from 1840 to 1941.

The Catholic church leased the building from them before St. Pius X was built by 1961. Since then, the Baptist, the Essex Alliance, and lastly the Pentecost churches held services there. At times it has been vacant, and the steeple was removed in the 1950s.

The steeple was still on top in the late 1940s as John Duby explains in an interview about the bell and A SENIOR TRADITION:

"When the bell was still up there, and the bell was in the [then Essex] High School too [on Bixby Hill Road]. The tradition was every Halloween the senior boys would break into the school and mix things up. One year I heard they brought a calf up and tied it to the principal's desk. . . Christine DeForge . . . lived [at 8 Jericho Road] right next door to the old church . . . But anyway, the principal at the time was Fay Whitcomb and he was determined that nobody was going to break into the school. He lived [next to] the school, at the old Ladd place and had this deputy sheriff. They were going to stake out the school [to] make sure nobody got in there. Well, previous to this, . . . I made my plans on the hill in advance. And I had gone up into



Librarian checking out books.

the belfry of the old church, hooked a wire onto the wheel that you turn the rope to ring the bell, threw the wire outside and into the evergreens next to Christine's house. So then come Halloween night, we got into the school and the principal, and the deputy sheriff had gone to the principal's house for coffee. So, we saw them go. We went into the school and moved things around. And the last thing we did was ring the bell. And they [John Duby and friends] hurried it down to Christine's house. And I ran into the church and while I was up there, they thought they were going to catch us in the belfry of the school, but they didn't. While they were there, from the outside I rang the bell in the church. And then we hid in Christine's house. And they came looking for us. But they didn't find us. Christine's grandmother said, 'I haven't seen them.'"

Thus, the brick building at 1 Browns River Road gave schools and the community various opportunities for fun, events, and worship before 1987 when the town approved a bond to preserve the historic structure for our library on the Town Common in the "Center" of Essex. So, as you enter in, walk up along the balcony, or venture downstairs, imagine all that has taken place there over the past 180 years.





FORT ETHAN WATER TOWER RESTORATION PROJECT

SPECIAL 4 PAGE PULL-OUT SECTION

SPECIAL
PULL OUT
SECTION!

FROM START TO FINISH OF PHASE ONE – ROOF AND WINDOWS REPAIRS

In 2009, due to stair safety concerns, the Fort Ethan Allen Water Tower was closed to the public and ECHS was no longer allowed to open the Tower for public access to the top as they had been doing a few times a year. It was at this point that the ECHS Board started thinking about a fundraising campaign to repair the stairs. Preservation professionals met with ECHS Board members, and it was determined critical repairs to the tile roof needed to be done before the stairs repairs to prevent water damage to the wooden structures under the tile.

Preliminary estimates for the roof and window repairs were \$150,000, \$150,000 for the stairs, and \$150,000 for the outside masonry. The ECHS Board brainstormed possible fundraising campaigns including individuals and businesses to contact, possible grant and foundation applications, and fundraising events to obtaining the needed funds.

In 2016, the ECHS Board took the leap and embarked on the Ft Ethan Allen Water Tower Restoration Project by presenting our proposal to the Essex Town Selectboard. The Selectboard approved our project, and it was first announced to the ECHS membership in a letter mailed in January 2017. A public announcement followed. Fund raising letters were sent to businesses at the Fort and local non-profit groups. ECHS Board members presented the project to meetings of the Essex Junction Lions Club and the Richmond Historical Society.

Applications were submitted to Historic New England and the Windham Foundation in 2017 and they awarded us \$1,000 and \$5,000. In 2017 and 2018, we applied for funding from the Walter Cerf Community Fund and it was denied both times. The second time, they were kind enough to tell us that they were in favor of our project but we needed to have available funds closer to the total project cost before they would approve our application.

In 2019, we applied for a grant in the amount of \$150,000 for preservation of African-American historic sites based on the Buffalo Soldiers being at the Fort from 1909 to 1913, but it was denied.

Money continued to trickle in and the Town continued to annually add money to the capital budget earmarked for the Tower. Essex and Essex Junction history calendars were launched in 2022 thanks to Art and Jan Kilmer with all proceeds going to the Tower fund. We had a yard sale and set up tables and donation jars at community events to publicize the Tower restoration and collect money. But we were still a long way from the monies needed. There were some dark days when the ECHS Board had some discussion around returning the money donated as we were not sure we would be able to raise the necessary funds.

In June of 2022, with the help of Greg Morgan, we applied for congressional directed spending funds in the amount of \$300,000 through Senator Sander's office. If approved, we

would have had enough money to complete all needed repairs at the Tower. Senator Sanders approved our application but it was rejected at the next level of review.

The Essex Selectboard and the Essex voters approved adding \$45,000 to the FY2023 capital budget. We now had enough funds to allow us to apply for a Vermont Historic Presentation matching grant and to again apply to the Walter Cerf Community Fund. Both approved our applications -- \$20,000 from the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation grant and \$10,000 from the Walter Cerf Community Fund.

In May of 2023, with the addition of the \$45,000 and the \$30,000 from these two grants, there was enough funds in the Tower accounts to enable the Town of Essex to award the contract for replacing the Water Tower slate roof and windows to Stewardship Slate of Burlington, Vermont. The work started in June 2023 and was finished in July 2023. There were also enough funds to allow ECHS to purchase a weather vane resembling the one seen on top of the Tower in a ca 1900 picture.

Finally, on July 26, 2023, ECHS Board members, Essex Public Works Department employees and a few members of the public watched Stewardship Slate raise and mount a replica of the ca 1900 weather vane to the top of the Tower returning it to its original look. This was the perfect climax for the end of the roof and window repairs (Phase 1)

Our Next Steps – Phase 2 and Phase 3

The ECHS Board has started fundraising for Phase 2 of the Water Tower Restoration – repointing the outside masonry.

Currently fundraising activities are:

- 2024 calendars – “the people who shaped the Essex community” – are available for purchase
- Area artists are painting the tower and/or fort scenes on the original 1893 tiles which will be available for purchase at the museum and fall craft shows or by contacting an ECHS Board member
- Applications will be submitted for additional historic preservation grants

And, it is our hope that the Essex Selectboard will be able to continue to add monies each year to the capital budget.

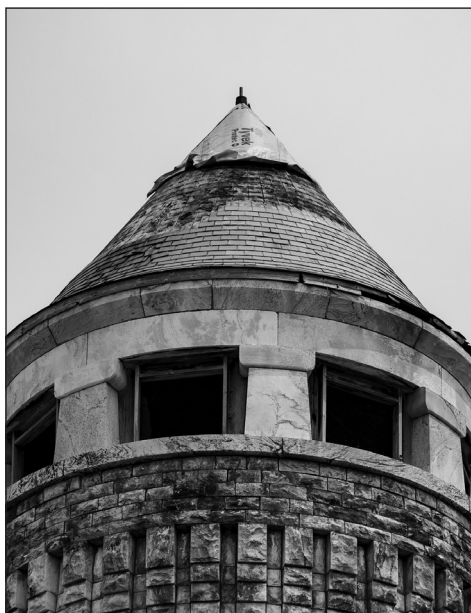
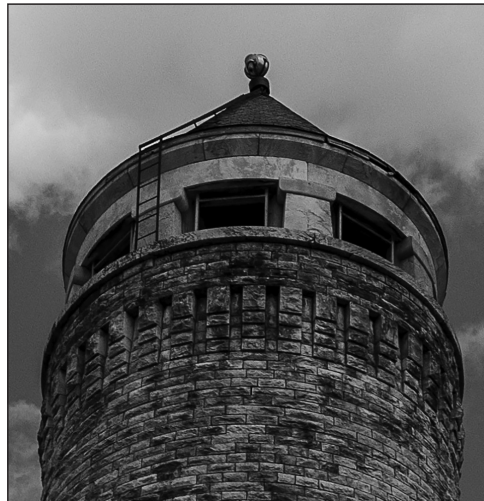
Once the masonry repointing is completed, fundraising for Phase 3, the stair repairs, will start. ECHS is committed to continuing to fund raise until the Tower is completely restored.





FORT ETHAN WATER TOWER

SPECIAL 4 PART



TOWER RESTORATION PROJECT

PAGE PULL-OUT SECTION

SPECIAL
PULL OUT
SECTION!





FORT ETHAN WATER TOWER RESTORATION PROJECT

SPECIAL 4 PAGE PULL-OUT SECTION

SPECIAL
PULL OUT
SECTION!

***THE ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
THANKS THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR DONATIONS***

TOWARD THE FORT ETHAN ALLEN WATER TOWER ROOF AND WINDOW REPAIRS

JANUARY 2017-MAY 2023

Alan Luzzatto
Art and Jan Kilmer
Anonymous
Ann Gray
Barbara Chapin
Bob and Polly McEwing
Bonnie Clapp and Family
Carl and Matha Houghton
Carl Lisman
Carole Ann Greig
Charles Vile
Dave and Eva Clough
David and June Keenan
Donald and Faye Soderberg
Dr. and Mrs. S. Henry Lampert
Gail and Malcolm Spencer
Gary, Penny, and Warren Irish
Harriet Riggs

Hubie and Sherry Norton
Irene Wrenner
James Barrett
James Cutler
James Power
Jennifer Gilbert
Jerry Fox
Joe and Laurie Jordan
J Kevin Graffagnino and Leslie Hasker
John Duby
Kathy Dodge
Kenyon Griffin
Lee and Mary Stewart
Lorei Dawson
Lori Rippa
Lyn Jarvis
Margaret Smith
Max and Alison Levy

Michael Guerra
Nick Muller
Patricia Bixby
Peg Hamlin
Philip and Alyce Bixby
Richard and Lucille Allen
Robert Wood
Sarah Dopp
Shirley Wool
Steve and Cathy Eustis
Susan and Burton Dunning
Susan Pringle
Thad Wolosinski
Tim Jerman
Town of Essex Selectboard
Town of Essex Voters
Will Parkinson

BUSINESS DONORS

Firetech Sprinkler Corp.

Fort Ethan Allen Industrial Park

Texas Roadhouse

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Essex Junction Lions Club
Ron Clapp Memorial Fund

Chittenden County Historical Society
Rotary Club Charities of Vermont

Richmond Historical Society

GRANTS

Historic New England
Walter Cerf Community Fund

Patrick Foundation
Windham Foundation

Vermont Department Historic Preservation

AND THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT OF THE PROJECT

Dennis Lutz

Town of Essex Public Works Department
Aaron Martin

Tom Yandow

THE ROOF AND WINDOW RESTORATION WORK

Stewardship Slate of Burlington
Jeff Spencer and Employees



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

October 2022-September 2023

REVENUE

Dues	380.00
Book sales	260.00
Contributions	
General Fund	595.00
Preservation Fund	170.00
Town of Essex FY24 Budget	4000.00
Calendar sales	1585.64
Interest income	74.22
Water Tower Phase 2	1450.16
Other -- mugs/t-shirts/trading cards	30.00
Total Revenue	8545.02

EXPENSE

Echo Newsletter	627.50
Postage/PO Box	443.10
Historical Society Dues (VHS)	50.00
Web page	66.78
Office supplies	150.40
Collection	278.75
Insurance	670.00
Tales and Treasures	450.00
Calendar	915.81
Comcast	1107.94
Donation	100.00
Total Expenses	4860.28

ACCOUNT BALANCES 9/30/23

General Accounts	
Checking	4192.11
Savings	1258.55
Restricted Accounts	
Collection insurance (checking)	750.00
Echo (checking)	700.00
Comcast (checking)	800.00
Tales and Treasures (checking)	463.62
Archival/preservation expense (checking)	925.00
CD -- TD Bank (separate)	4883.84
1805 Schoolhouse Fund (savings)	577.00
Water Tower (separate)	4953.43
Total Cash on Hand	19503.55

**Thank you to the following
who have made donations since
the Spring 2023 Echo**

Preservation Fund
Robert Wood

Ft Ethan Allen Water Tower Phase 2
Ric Cengeri
Eva Clough
Firetech Sprinkler Corp.
Art and Jan Kilmer

FORT ETHAN ALLEN WATER TOWER RESTORATION ROOF AND WINDOW REPAIRS FINANCIAL REPORT (ECHS FUNDS)

Income

Donations from ECHS Members	\$10,202.98
Donations from public	\$ 3,723.50
Donations from non-profit organizations	\$ 900.00
Patrick Foundation	\$ 1,000.00
Windham Foundation	\$ 5,000.00
Walter Cerf Community Fund	\$10,000.00
Historic Preservation Grants	
Historic New England	\$ 1,000.00
Vermont Department Historic Preservation	\$20,000.00
Fundraisers	\$ 1,870.80
Interest	\$ 521.99
Total Income	\$54,219.27

Expense Town of Essex	\$29,500.00
Vermont Department Historic Preservation*	\$20,000.00
Weather vanes of Maine**	\$ 1,216.00
Total Expense***	\$50,716.00

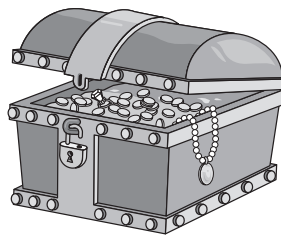
**Balance transferred to Masonary and Stairs Restoration
(Phase 2)** **\$3,503.27**

*Paid directly from State of Vermont to Town of Essex

** ECHS directly purchased weatherwane from Weather vanes of Maine

***Total project cost \$175,525 paid by Town of Essex. Balance paid from Town of Essex capital budget

Special thanks to the following people who participated in our Tales and Treasures Summer Program. Jim Jones, Judy Dow, Jerry Fox, Hubie Norton, and William Parkinson. Also thanks to Sue Richardson from the Jericho Historical Society, Dick Allen from the Williston Historical Society, and Karen Yaggy, Fran Thomas, Martha Turner, and Mary Ann Barnes from the Richmond Historical Society for their participation in our opening day event.



PAINTED TILES



ECHS would like to thank all the people who got us started on our Painted Slate Roof Tile project. Brenda Brooks, Alice Dunn, Genie O'Neil, and Tina Pepi. Their work has raised over \$600.00 toward the Phase 2 Water Tower Restoration. We now have many more local artists who are painting more tiles, including the Essex Art League. Our thanks go out to everyone who has taken an interest in this project. If you are an artist and would like to be a part of this project please reach out to us. We have plenty of the 130 year old slate tiles left.

2024 CALENDAR

"People Who Shaped the Essex Community"

Putting together a calendar is not an easy task. First you need a title. Once you have a title you need to brainstorm a list of what or who might fill the twelve calendar pages. Once that is decided you need volunteers to research and put together information into a brief paragraph or two. Then pictures are needed to add to the page. Important dates need to be added. There is editing to do, lots of editing, checking and rechecking dates, and spelling. Finally, after five months it is ready to go to the printers.

I am pleased to introduce you to our third calendar. I hope you all have been enjoying learning about our history. This coming year you will meet and learn about people who played a big part in making our community what it is today.

The following people need to be thanked for their part in making this calendar a success. Like the people who shaped the Essex Community, these people shaped the calendar.

Maureen Labenski, Tim Jerman, Ann Gray, Jan Kilmer, Robert Wood, Jerry Fox, Scott Taylor, Eva Clough, Hubie Norton, Sherry Norton, Paw Print & Mail, last and certainly not least Art Kilmer who spent many hours putting all of our ideas, words, pictures and corrections into the 2024 calendar.

PLEASE BE SURE TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

<https://www.facebook.com/EssexCommunityHistoricalSociety/>
and visit our webpage:

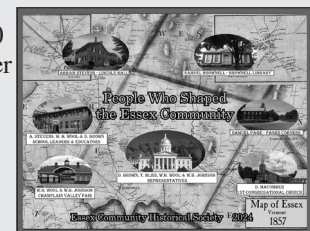
<http://essexcommunityhistoricalsociety.org>

THE 2024 CALENDAR IS HERE!!

Due to the rising cost of paper and printing we have had to change the cost of our calendar this year to \$20. We will also be selling our Essex and Essex Junction book by Richard and Lucille Allen for \$20. Lastly we will have our painted 130-year-old slate water tower roof tiles for sale at \$50 each. If you want to buy a blank tile to bring home a piece of Essex History we are selling those for \$15-\$20 each. All proceeds from the sales will go directly into our Fort Ethan Allen Water Tower fund. These items will be available at:

Saturday, Nov. 4, 9-3pm, Harriet Farnsworth Powell Museum
(During Essex Free Library Cozy Nook Craft Show)

Saturday, Nov. 11, 9-3pm, First Congregational Church, Essex Jct.



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

President: Eva Clough (2023-2025)

Vice President: Jerry Fox (2022-2024)

Secretary: Jan Kilmer (2023-2025)

Treasurer: Ann Gray (2022-2024)

Shawn Bartlett (2022-2024)

Kathy Dodge: (2024-2026)

Ron Russotti: (2024-2026)

Scott Taylor (2023-2025)

Charles Willard (2024-2026)

Please take a look at your address label. The expiration date of your membership is noted. You can use the form below to update your membership.



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 _____ Email _____

MEMBERSHIP:

___ Individual membership \$10

___ Family membership \$15

___ Senior membership (60 and over) \$5

___ Lifetime: individual, married, civil union \$100

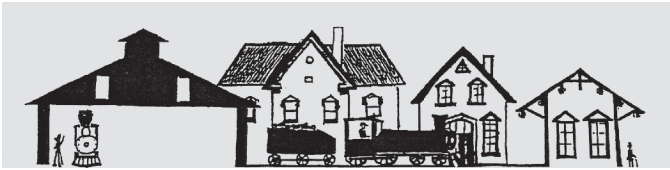
DONATIONS:

___ Water Tower Fund \$ _____

___ Preservation Fund \$ _____

(for preserving our Archives)

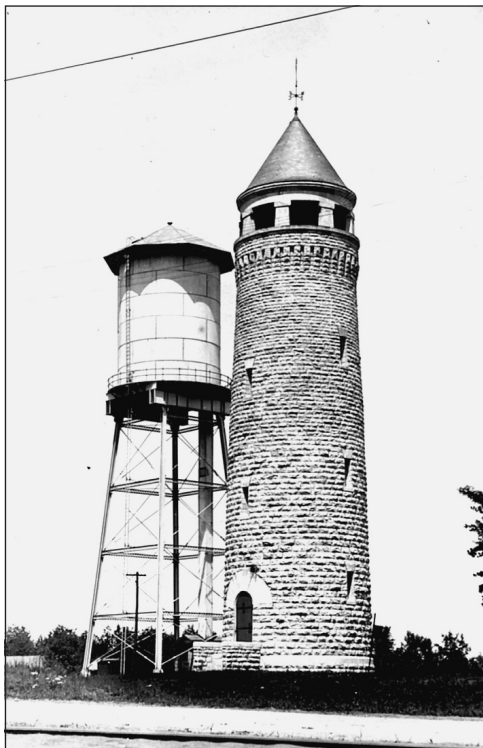
Make checks payable to the Essex Community Historical Society. Thank You.



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O.Box 8388

Essex, Vermont 05451



**Look inside for
The Fort Ethan Allen
Water Tower
pullout section.
See pictures and news
about the Phase One
tower restoration.**

**SPECIAL
PULL OUT
SECTION!**

