

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 1 NO. 2

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1

"Our Town"
Programs

New
Membership
Policy

Page 2

Books On Sale

Gift
Memberships

Publications
Committee
Seeks New
Authors

Collections
Preservation
and Restoration
Fund

Committee
Corner

Page 3

Building
Committee
Seeks
Housekeepers

Old Kodachrome
Slides Sought By
Author

Page 4

John Phair
Update



"Your chair is waiting for you". Research facilities and assistance are available Mon. 6-9 p.m. and Sat. 1-4 p.m.

"OUR TOWN" PROGRAMS

A series of informal presentations on topics of Rutland history with audience participation encouraged will be held at the Fox Room of the Rutland Free Library on Wednesday evenings. The programs will start at 7:00 p.m. and conclude by 8:30 p.m.

WED. 14 SEP 1994

History of Baseball in Rutland

WED. 21 SEP 1994

Library/Post Office Swap (1934)

WED. 28 SEP 1994

The Women's Reformatory

WED. 5 OCT 1994

Rutland Street Railway System

WED. 12 OCT 1994

Early Autos and Auto Dealers in
Rutland Area

NEW MEMBERSHIP POLICY

A single subscription mailed to a single address may include a membership for both Mr. and Mrs. Only one copy of publications will be sent but both people will be fully vested members with all voting and office-holding privileges. This option will not include LIFE memberships and will only include SENIOR memberships if BOTH persons are seniors. It is hoped that this will encourage both spouses to be active Society members. Current members who wish to have spouses added should contact the Membership Secretary to have the M/M prefix added to the member name.

BOOKS ON SALE

Early Families of Rutland, Vermont and *History of Rutland, Vermont, 1761-1861* are both on sale for thirty dollars (\$30) each until the end of 1994. They may be purchased at the Society during public hours (Mon. 6-9 p.m. and Sat. 1-4 p.m.). If mailing is required, shipping and handling costs of two dollars (\$2) must be added. These books will make excellent gifts. Upon request, the Society will enclose an appropriate gift letter at no additional charge.

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

Have you thought of a gift membership for that person for whom it seems so difficult to find the right gift? A gift membership continues to repeat your sentiments throughout the year. In addition, for those who no longer live in Rutland, it may awaken and sustain old community roots. Upon request, the Society will enclose an appropriate gift letter at no additional charge. A regular membership is only ten dollars (\$10) for the year.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE SEEKS NEW AUTHORS

The Publications Committee constantly seeks persons interested in researching and writing articles appropriate for *Quarterlies*. If you have a Rutland history topic in which you are interested and would like to consider putting it together for a *Quarterly*, please contact Jean Ross (773-7301) or Elaine Purdy (773-6819) of the Publications Committee. Editorial assistance is available to polish the final result and lay out the text and appropriate photographic material.

COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION FUND

The Society Board of Directors has established a Preservation and Restoration Fund. Monies ear-marked for this purpose will be used for the care and maintenance of collection items such as the Society's paintings, which need cleaning and associated restoration work, and the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) stained glass windows, which need some repair. Items that require expert cleaning and restoration work need professional care that the Society must purchase, hence the Preservation and Restoration Fund. Those interested in this Fund may submit contributions to Tom Carpenter, Treasurer. Please clearly mark your donation as for this purpose.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Chairpersons

Archives Committee -
Don Bordeau - 775-2761

Artifacts Committee -
Eleanor Elwert - 773-3417

Building Committee -
Ron Butterfield - 775-5883

Exhibit Committee -
Jim Davidson - 773-7525

**Historic Preservation
Committee** - Ann Singiser -
773-8172

Library Committee -
Ann Glagola - 775-1302

**Long-range Planning
Committee** - Bob Beauchamp
- 773-9281

Membership Committee -
Jim Davidson - 773-7525

Personnel Committee -
Carroll T. Jones - 773-9055

Program Committee -
Linda Gee - 775-1035

Public Relations -
Ken Wild - 773-8687

Publications - Jean Ross -
773-7301 / Elaine Purdy -
773-6819

Research - Dawn Hance -
775-4406

President - Morris "Mo"
Tucker - 773-7356

BUILDING COMMITTEE SEEKS HOUSEKEEPERS

Every home has a never-ending round of housekeeping chores from dusting to vacuuming to washing windows. So does your Society. The Society needs to put its housekeeping on a regular basis so that Nickwackett Fire House always presents a clean face to the public. This requires a group of volunteers who would be willing to do a monthly clean-through of our home.

Restroom and carpet touch-up cleaning can be done by members who are frequently at the Society.

It is hoped that a group of those who are comfortable with housekeeping tasks would be willing to take on this job. Remembering that many hands make light work, the Society would like to assemble a group of eight (8) or more persons who would donate approximately two hours a month to the housekeeping need.

OLD KODACHROME SLIDES SOUGHT BY AUTHOR

The best preserved photographic record of the daily lives of postwar Americans was made on Kodachrome slide film. Introduced as the first modern color film in 1936, Kodachrome was widely used in the postwar era by "snapshot" photographers wanting to document family and friends in vivid and realistic color. The vast majority of these Kodachromes remain in excellent condition in attics and closets of homes across the country.

If you have old Kodachrome slides of family or friends, you have an opportunity to become part of a unique folk portrait of the American people in postwar America. Guy Stricherz, a photographic historian and printer of fine-art photographs, is producing a book and traveling exhibition entitled *AMERICANS IN KODACHROME: Photographic Folk Art, 1945-1965*. The book and exhibition will consist of 100 photographs made from Kodachrome slides taken by non-professional photographers in the post-World War II years, 1945-1965. *AMERICANS IN KODACHROME* will form a populist self-portrait of the people, by the people, and for the people.

You may submit any number of Kodachrome slides taken in the United States between 1945 and 1965. People should be the primary subject. All slides will be handled with great care and promptly returned. It is recommended that slides be sent via U. S. Certified Mail, and include return postage. If selected, the photographer will be credited in the book and exhibition, and will receive a 16" X 20" Dye Transfer print of the selected Kodachrome and a copy of the book. Dye Transfer is a fade-resistant color printing method of unsurpassed quality first made available in 1946.

For more information, please call or write to:

Guy Stricherz
23 Prince Street
New York, NY 10012
Tel.: (212) 226-3399

ANNUAL MEETING - THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 1994

JOHN PHAIR UPDATE

Readers of the 1874 Rutland Murder Mystery (Vol. XXIII No. 4 RHS Quarterly, 1993) who had doubts about the guilt of John may be interested to know that sometime after the issuance of this Quarterly, Johnnie Francis of Rutland contacted the editors. Although he could not vouch for the truth of the story, he reported that some years ago a woman, whom he knew, asked him if he knew about John Phair. Johnnie indicated that he had never heard of him. The woman went on to briefly tell of the murder and the conviction of Phair. However, she commented that Phair was an innocent man. She went on to say that a lady that she knew had been present at the deathbed of a "Jerry" Thornton in a house in Center Rutland. The doctor had just finished telling him that he was going to die. Thornton told the doctor that he wanted to get something off his chest. He then stated, "I killed Ann Freese."

The editors have tried to track down the truth of this story. There were three Jeremiah Thorntons in the area. One was a

deputy sheriff who aggressively assisted in gathering the evidence that convicted John Phair. However, he appears to have died in Mendon which would eliminate him unless the record means that he died "while a resident of Mendon". For those who were unsettled by the ease with which evidence of John Phair's guilt was assembled, this is an attractive theory. The second "Jerry" Thornton was the son of the first. He would have been fifteen years old at the time of the murder. Although young for a murderer, the evidence would all be plausible, except that he died at the Rutland Hospital. It may be possible that he was moved to the hospital from the Center Rutland house. The third Jeremiah Thornton lived in Ira but died in West Rutland. If his deathplace in West Rutland was on the road to Center Rutland, it could be concluded that the woman who told the story used the term "Center Rutland" loosely and referred to a house on old Route # 4, just over the West Rutland line. Conspiracy enthusiasts will be excited and the average reader will be puzzled more than ever by Rutland's Murder Mystery.

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
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 Jim Davidson - Editor

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