

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT

VOL. 9 NO. 3 RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2002

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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual Business Meeting of the Rutland Historical Society will be held on Wednesday 16 October 2002 at the Society at 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont. The business meeting, which includes reports and the election of officers and directors, will start at 7:00 pm.

At approximately 7:30 pm Kevin Thornton will offer a slide talk entitled "Political Messages in Ordinary Things in 19th Century Vermont". This presentation will examine a number of 19th Century objects, most from the collections of the Shelburne Museum. Quilts, weathervanes, buildings, paintings, plates, bottles and a cookbook, among other ordinary things, all share a sometimes open, sometimes hidden, series of messages about how New Englanders in the 1800s understood the importance of America and their place in American society. This program will help the audience to "decode" the ideological world of 19th Century Vermonters.

Kevin Thornton has a Ph.D from the University of Michigan in 1996. Although a native of Boston, Massachusetts, Kevin spent some of his youth in Vermont and in 1997 returned to live in Brandon.

VISITS

On 2 July a group of Home School children of primary age visited the Society. On 10 July Elaine Purdy and Jim Davidson presented a program on the General E. H. Ripley Family and their home at the Mendon Historical Society.

SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS NOMINATED

Pres. Helen Davidson
V.P. Dorothy Whitford
Sec. Jacob Sherman
Treas. Thomas Carpenter

Dir. (2 yrs.) Carmine Pacca
Dir. (2 yrs.) Karen Sanborn
Dir. (2 yrs.) Morris Tucker

Continuing Directors are:
Robert Cassidy, Michael Dwyer and
Angela Hinchey.

Submitted by Mary Segale,
Chairperson of Personnel Committee

ITALIAN IMMIGRATION PROJECT

The Society's Board of Directors has approved plans for a Rutland Italian Immigration project whose goal will be to gather information about Rutland Italian immigrant families. Michael F. Dwyer has been appointed chairperson of this ad hoc committee.

CEMETERY INITIATIVE

Thank you to those who answered the appeal for help to organize an on-going program to restore and maintain local cemeteries. This program will involve many other organizations but the Society is taking the initiative to organize such a program. Persons who would like to join the present organizational volunteers should contact Dorothy Whitford at the Society. Planning will begin this fall.

"HISTORICALLY SPEAKING" ON CHANNEL 15 IN RUTLAND

The Society produces "Historically Speaking" on Channel 15. A new program is produced each month. The series includes interviews and historical pictorial material in a rather flexible TV magazine format. The programs can be seen every Wednesday at 4:00 pm, Thursday at 1:30 pm and Friday at 7:30 pm. Videotapes of the following episodes can be obtained from Channel 15, Rutland Regional Community Television, P.O. Box 500, Rutland VT 05702-0500. They are \$10 for each episode. Make checks payable to the above. You must provide a self-addressed padded bag with postage. Channel 15 provides the tape. Personal pickup is available. Call (802) 747-0151 for further information.

Episode # 37 - Tom Carpenter hosts Michael F. Dwyer in a presentation on the Italian Immigration to Rutland in the early 20th Century. Michael discusses the problems in finding ancestors' names in the Ellis Island records, which are now accessible online, and offers solutions. He also talks about the two major locations in Italy and Sicily from whence most of Rutland's Italian immigrants came.

Episode # 38 - Jim Davidson hosts a program entitled "The Changing Ways That History Is Conveyed". The program offers brief vignettes from Rutland's beginning to the 1920's. There is a sampling of visual material from sketches, paintings, photographs and movie film from 1914. Textual material is delivered through poetic verse, narration, and documents. There are even a couple of artifacts used to illustrate the point that Rutland's history can be, and has been, conveyed in many ways.

Episode # 39 - Jim Davidson hosts Michael Dwyer in a program on the Irish immigration to Rutland. This program is the fourth in a series on Rutland immigrant groups and the challenge to find their ancestors. Name variations can cause serious problems for the novice family history searcher. Another problem is the all too common use of the same names in multiple generations. Michael brings a great deal of light to the problems of Irish immigrant searches. Many Irish in Rutland came through Canada. Sources for tracking these people are offered.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

The Society has recently had three new volunteers for the Thursday evening archives group which brings its strength up to six. In addition there have been three new volunteers to the Saturday Host Committee which means that each individual will only be scheduled seven or eight Saturdays per year rather than once a month. Another individual has volunteered to serve on the Research Committee. Many hands not only help to lighten the load but enable the Society to accomplish so much more. Thank you volunteers. Yes, there is room for more.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Chairpersons

Archives Committee

Alan Shelvey - 775-4168

Artifacts Committee

Eleanor Elwert - 773-3417

Building Committee

Morris Tucker - 773-7356

Exhibit Committee

Jim Davidson - 773-7525

Finance Committee

Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

Historic Preservation Committee

David Nettleton - 438-2689

Library Committee

Ann Glagola - 775-1302

Membership Committee

Jim Davidson - 773-7525

Personnel Committee

Mary Segale - 773-2326

Program Committee

Michael F. Dwyer - 483-6993

Publications Committee

Jake Sherman - 775-2784

Research Committee

Dorothy Whitford - 773-3219

Society Historian

Mary Segale - 773-2326

President

Helen Davidson - 773-7525

Board Chairperson

Michael F. Dwyer - 483-6993

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Rutland Historical Society continues to be a place of great activity. Archival and research materials are constantly received and added to the collections by volunteers who now meet three times weekly to process and catalog these gifts. The Society's materials are available for use during the public hours on Mondays from 6 to 9 pm and Saturdays from 1 to 4 pm. Special arrangements to visit the Society can be made upon request.

During the past year the Society has hosted special programs for school and community groups both at the Society and at other locations. During May and June of 2002 the Society was host to approximately 300 children who made school group visits. This number also included Home School children from other localities. School groups are provided a special program and a walking tour. Society volunteers also make visits to Rutland area schools upon request.

During the Fall the Society offered free public programs which included: Vermont History Day winner, Anna Whooley, in her interpretation of Ann Story; Robert Cassidy, Castleton State College student, "Tales From the Covered Bridges" and "Walking In the Footsteps of Civil War Veterans" from the Otter Valley Union High School students of Michael F. Dwyer. The Spring series offered: Vincent Feeney on "The Celery War: Struggle in the Catholic Church", co-sponsored by the Vermont Council On the Humanities; "The Black Presence in Rutland" which was co-sponsored with the Multiracial Alliance of the Rutland Area (MARA); a lecture and book signing by Deborah Clifford, author of *The Passion of Abby Hemenway*, which was co-sponsored with the Vermont Historical Society; and a new monologue by Anna Wholley on "Who Will Defend Us: The Plea of the Irish Mill Girl" which was co-sponsored by the Twilight Homemakers Club. The Rutland Historical Society has also made its facilities available for some "history-connected" presentations by other organizations. Volunteer members of the Society attend meetings and programs of other organizations that are pertinent to Rutland's history or present day functions.

The Society participated in the Loyalty Day Parade with the help of a group of young people from the Hubbardton-Castleton-Poultney area who manned a float commemorating the Battle of Hubbardton. The Society was also represented in the Halloween Parade with a "Time Machine". In 2002 the Society's summer dance series, co-sponsored with the Rutland Recreation Department, was discontinued due to small attendance. The Society continued its participation in Rutland's First Night program by providing recorded music for dancing and listening in the State Office building. The monthly "Historically Speaking" series continues on Channel 15, the local public access channel. It has included advice for genealogical research on French-Canadian, Polish, Italian and Irish immigration to the Rutland area. The Society is now entering its fourth year of programming that can be seen weekly on Wednesdays at 4:00 pm; Thursdays at 1:30 pm; and Fridays at 7:30 pm.

Four Newsletters and Quarterlies were published during the year. "Tidbits From Then and Now" by Helen Davidson continues as a weekly series in *Sam's Good News*.

The main exhibit of "Eight Generations of Rutland's History" [1770 - 2010] was continued during this year and it has been suggested that it be a permanent exhibit.

The Society's photo reproduction service continues to supply individuals and businesses with a free service in selecting appropriate photos and getting them reproduced. The reproduction costs and framing are the responsibility of the client. The 48 framed photos at City Hall have been very well received. In the past year the Society has been particularly active in the programs of other local organizations.

Additional volunteers have been added to assist in the increased activities of the Society. The Society is viewed as well-organized and in the forefront of new initiatives among local historical societies.

The Society thanks its members and the people of the community for their continued support. New volunteers are always welcome.

Helen K. Davidson, President

SALE

The Society will hold a sale on Saturday and Sunday, 12 and 13 October from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Society at 96 Center Street.

Inside, the Henry Safford Fiske collection of Vermont and Lake Champlain sketches from the 1890s will be on display and for sale. The Society books *Early Families of Rutland* and *History of Rutland, 1761-1861*, back issues of the Society's *Quarterly* and framed prints of the 1905 Rutland Railroad station and the 1850s Sheldons, Morgan and Slason Marble Quarry by James Hope will be for sale.

Outside, under an awning, the Society will offer the following items:

- (1) About 150 picture frames with glass. These frames are of an ordinary style and are no longer needed by the Society which has recently transferred the pictures to a safer environment. The frames are in a variety of sizes from six by eight inches to 23 by 27 inches.
- (2) Duplicate issues of *Vermont History* and *Vermont Life*.
- (3) Back issues of *New England Historical and Genealogical Society Register*.
- (4) Duplicate volumes of *Laws of Vermont*.
- (5) Duplicate town and city reports etc.
- (6) Duplicate telephone directories.
- (7) A collection of general books not appropriate to the Society's collections.
- (8) Some lumber scraps that may be of interest to the home craftsman or hobbyist.

All of the outside items will be priced to sell.

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Publications Committee of the Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont 05701-4023. Tel. (802) 775-2006. Jim Davidson - *Editor*

DUES SCHEDULE

Sponsor	\$50.00	Students	\$8.00
Contributing	\$20.00	(18 & under)	
Regular	\$10.00	Senior citizens	\$8.00
		(62 & up)	
Life Membership			\$200.00
(Individuals only)			
Memorial Membership			\$200.00

FALL PROGRAMS

The majority of folks who visit the Society are working on family history. Usually, they have some problem in finding and putting all the pieces together. In response to this need, the Program Committee will feature a series of three, hands-on, genealogy workshops led by Michael F. Dwyer who will share his expertise and 20 years of experience.

Each program will be tailored to the needs of the participants. The public is invited to attend any one of the programs or all three. Each workshop will have a different focus.

WED 2 October at 7:00 pm "How to Get Started On A Family Genealogy: Methods and Sources"

This program is primarily for the person who has an interest in genealogy but doesn't know where to start. In addition to helping organize family records, there will be an examination of a variety of records that most people would have in their homes that would be useful in assembling a family history.

WED 9 October at 7:00 pm "How To Find 19th Century Immigrant Ancestors"

This workshop will feature an overview and analysis of records that would be most helpful to the family historian who is looking for an elusive immigrant ancestor. The objective of many searches is to pinpoint the exact town of origin of the ancestor.

WED 16 October (See Annual Business Meeting on page one for details).

WED 23 October at 7:00 pm "How To Find 20th Century Ancestors"

This workshop will examine a variety of records, including internet sources, that help family historians document the recent past of their parents and grandparents. The program will examine some common pitfalls in research as well as how to preserve family history of the present for future generations.

**THE FACILITIES OF THE
RUTLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY ARE OPEN ON:
MONDAYS 6 - 9 PM
SATURDAYS 1 - 4 PM**