

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT



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RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2010

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BUILDING THE SOCIETY'S EXPO EXHIBIT

Exhibit Committee members Morris Tucker, Carmine Pacca, Angela Hinchey, Helen Davidson, and Jim Davidson joined Chairperson Chuck Piotrowski for a number of meetings to put together the agricultural thread in the history of a town best known for its history as a retail, railroad, and industrial center.

At first, adapting the exhibit to an agricultural theme seemed a daunting task. As the committee brainstormed ideas, the agricultural thread in Rutland's history became more and more apparent. In fact, agricultural concepts and materials began to challenge the committee's ability to place them into the confines of an eight foot by eight foot exhibit space.

Technology quickly came to the rescue. Agriculturally related images began to abound as the committee researched them. The decision was made to put multiple images into a visual projection that would tour the multiplicity of agricultural images available. Copies of images that were not used in the multimedia presentation were combined into two notebooks for visitor perusal.

The committee produced a printed timeline to provide a context in which to explore changes in the agricultural thread in Rutland's history. (*See page 3 for the timeline.*)

In the future the committee plans to turn some of the images into a "Historically Speaking" episode.



President Chuck Piotrowski and his "First Lady" Erin work the exhibit.

“HISTORICALLY SPEAKING” ON CHANNEL 15 IN RUTLAND

The Society produces a new program each month. The series includes interviews and historical pictorial material in a rather flexible TV magazine format. The programs can be seen Wednesdays at 4:00 PM, Thursdays at 1:30 PM, and Fridays at 7:30 PM. DVDs of past episodes can be obtained from Rutland Regional Community Television, 1 Scale Avenue, Suite 108, Rutland, VT 05701-4460. They are \$10 for each episode. Make checks payable to RRCT. Include \$2.50 for shipping and handling. Personal pickup is available. Call (802) 747-0151 for further information. For a complete listing of past shows consult the Society web site (rutlandhistory.com).

To watch the current or previous episode of “Historically Speaking” in streaming video on your computer: (1) go to the Society web site (rutlandhistory.com), (2) click on “Historically Speaking,” and (3) click on the second paragraph which will link you to the Video On Demand Library on the PEG-TV web site. In the search box at the top of the video player, type in “Historically Speaking” then click on the magnifying glass button to the right. You should get a choice of the two most recent programs.

Episode # 111 – “Faces of the Past I”

Jake Sherman relates biographies of several characters of early Rutland history that appeared in the Rutland Historical Society calendar for 2010. The program also shares the 14 images of these people who were born in the 1700s. The availability of these early images is truly amazing. Jim Davidson hosts the program.

Episode # 112 – “The Long Trail”

The Rutland Historical Society has nearly 100 glass slides of views along the Long Trail from about 1913 to 1930. These are integrated into a story of the Long Trail prepared by guest Bob Perkins. Jim Davidson hosts the program.

Episode # 113 – “History of Agriculture in Rutland”

The Rutland Historical Society developed a multimedia presentation for its exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Expo in keeping with the Expo theme of agriculture. This program is an adaptation of that presentation for “Historically Speaking.” The presenter is Chuck Piotrowski and the host is Jim Davidson.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Chairpersons

Building Committee

Mickey Kelly - 773-9402

Cemetery Committee

Chris Book - 773-6252

Collections Committee

Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

Exhibit Committee

Chuck Piotrowski - 747-5447

Finance Committee

Tom Carpenter - 773-3626

Membership Committee

Robert Perkins - 773-0184

Personnel Committee

Mary Segale - 773-2326

Program Committee

Jim Davidson - 773-7525

Publications Committee

Jake Sherman - 775-2784

Research Committee

Helen Davidson - 773-7525

Society Historian

Mary Segale - 773-2326

Technology and Telecommunications Committee

Chuck Piotrowski - 747-5447

President

Chuck Piotrowski - 747-5447

Board Chairperson

Clifford Griffin - 773-3743

RUTLAND: HARVEST HOME – A TIMELINE

1770-1790: *Settling Into Settlement:* The foundation of Rutland was characterized by sparse settlement and strong reliance upon the land. Farming was essential for survival and trade was sporadic. The early settlers had to carve out farms and quickly learn what could grow. The early settlers traded mostly in a barter economy where any excess harvest or livestock could be traded for essential goods.

1790-1850: *Growing Local, Sending Global:* Carving farms out of the forest wilderness felled hardwoods that were not wasted. Enterprising farmers made potash from the burned wood and sent it to markets in Boston and Albany. These trading centers then sent it throughout the young nation and internationally. Potash was used in a variety of growing industries such as soap and glass making. Potash was also a critical ingredient in making gunpowder, which was in high demand during the Napoleonic Wars that ravaged Europe early in the 19th century. In the peace after the War of 1812, New England boomed economically and the textile mill became the heart of the Industrial Revolution. Wool was needed for the mills and Rutland became a center for raising Merino sheep. The town earned a significant reputation for its Merino and some of these sheep were sold to settlers in the Western U.S. and Australia where they became the foundation of flocks that supported generations.

1850-1880: *Livestock as Livelihood and Locomotives:* It is in this era that the production of maple, dairy, and hay all significantly increased and first become the dominant characteristics of Rutland agriculture. Prior to the Civil War a market developed in town as it became a center for local garden markets, packing and shipping. During the Civil War Rutland's wool clothed, and its dairy fed, Union soldiers. After the war the town strengthened its role as a commercial center as the railroad provided quick shipments to large markets throughout the Northeast and beyond. This gave rise to the occupation of "Market Gardener," farmers who grew produce specifically for sale in local and distant markets. The speed of the railroads and innovative use of ice in railroad cars allowed Rutland's dairy products to make it to the large cities safely.

1880-1950: *Milk Trains, Mechanizing, and Fertilizing:* While Rutland grew with success of the marble industry, its mechanical innovations helped local agriculture increase yields and decrease backbreaking labor. Farm and dairy equipment factories sprung up and companies like Manning and Grimm prospered. Many innovations, like steam power, that were used for stone cutting were also applied to farming. Rutland became a world center for fertilizer production.
(continued on page 4)



DON'T FORGET YOUR 2010 DUES



DUES SCHEDULE

\$8 Student, \$8 Senior (62+), \$10 Regular, \$20 Contributor,
\$50 Sponsor, \$200 Lifetime (Individuals only)

SOCIETY OUTREACH

Helen Davidson presented the "Five Letters from Dottie" program for the Triad gathering on April 4. Unfortunately, "The Talegatorz" ran into a time conflict and were unable to participate in the Loyalty Day Parade on May 2. The Society substituted a float commemorating three Revolutionary War veterans and three Civil War veterans. Helen and Jim Davidson attended the PEG-TV Annual Meeting on May 10. Jim Davidson did a walking tour for a Success School class on May 28. Bill Powers of the Society gave the major address at the Pittsford Memorial Day Parade. Bob Perkins and Jim Davidson prepared a program on "The Long Trail" for the Killington Section's anniversary dinner on June 5. On June 4 Jim Davidson played the VHS tape show "David Sawyer's World" for a class from the Success School. On June 5 Bill Powers gave a talk to the Rochester Historical Society on the 1957 Airplane Crash in Chittenden. On June 26 and 27 the Society exhibited at the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge. On June 29, Bill Powers volunteered at the Pittsford Historical Society and on six days in late June and early July Bill and Ivy Dixon worked on the Hawk Hill/June Cemetery in Brandon. Walking tours for the Rutland School System's Tapestry Program were led on June 12 by Bob Perkins, on June 13 by Jim Davidson, and on June 14 and 19 by Fred Remington.

It is significant to note the number of volunteers involved in the Society's various outreach programs. In the last *News From Nickwackett* particular note was made of what is happening "behind the walls" of the Society. In this issue tribute is made to those who represent the Society outside the walls.

**IF THE DATE ON YOUR LABEL IS
2009 YOUR DUES FOR 2010 ARE
NOW DUE**

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RUTLAND: HARVEST HOME – A TIMELINE

(continued from page 3) Using many of the mineral resources around the town, Marcellus Wheeler was able to create a fertilizer of such enduring fame that it led to the moniker of "The Fertilizer King of the World." Wheeler moved his business to Rutland in 1886 and merged it with a Tennessee based company in 1899. By his death in 1927, Marcellus Wheeler was believed to be the richest man in the city and his philanthropy included being a founding member and a significant financial backer of the Green Mountain Club.

1950-Present: Highway Transportation, Globalization, and Re-localization:

The boom in refrigerated interstate trucking, advances in food science, and the supply-chain based grocery stores brought the diversity and abundance of the world's agriculture to Rutland, often at a lower price than that of local goods. While this proved to be a boon for consumers, it was disastrous for local agriculture. As Rutland's farmers had benefited from quick and safe transportation of their goods a century before, by 1970 the same factors had Rutland's dairy and fruit farmers competing first with the massive milk producers of the Midwest, then the agricultural powerhouses of California and Washington and, then, the cornucopias of Central and South America. By 2000, a significant reaction to the globalization of agriculture gave birth to small organic farms, the "Buy Local" and "Localvore" movements, and Rutland's Farmers Market.

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