

NEWS FROM NICKWACKETT



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THE RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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SOCIETY EXHIBITS AT THE 2012 VERMONT HISTORY EXPO

A special committee was formed this past winter to plan and create the Society's exhibit for the 2012 Vermont History Expo. Chairman, Bob Ranftle and committee members George Bradley, Rosemary Bradley, Jim Davidson, Cliff Giffin, Angela Hinchey, Pam Johnson, Chuck Piotrowski, and Bill Powers have met frequently over the past several months. The first task was to come up with a topic for the Society's exhibit in keeping with the overall theme of the Civil War. Once "The Vermont/Rutland Sharpshooters" was selected the committee was off and running.

Each person conducted research in a different area, coming together at meetings to share their results and to decide how to best exhibit their findings. Standard display boards were used, augmented by Angela Hinchey's water color rendering of the Fairgrounds, colored illustrations from Civil War reference books, and images of Rutland Sharpshooters. The Committee was fortunate to locate some period and re-enactor artifacts (including weapons) to bring authenticity to the display.

A target shooting computer game was developed to add a kid-friendly and interactive touch, as was recommended by the Expo organizers.

Everything started coming together the last few weeks before the Expo, reaching a feverish pitch the last week with Jim Davidson carefully sizing each piece and then adhering them to the board. On the morning of setup all was ready to be loaded onto a truck and driven to Tunbridge by Bill Powers. The setup itself went smoothly with the participation of the committee members and others. There were two teams of three to man the exhibit (George and Rosemary Bradley and Angela Hinchey on Saturday and Bob and Carolynn Ranftle and Pam Johnson on Sunday), plus re-enactor Tom Shanahan, who generously agreed to be present both days to demonstrate the details of the weapons. The exhibit was very well received and there was lots of interest. The weapons were a big hit and the game was popular with the kids. See page 3 for more on the exhibit itself.



“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. Consult the Society website (rutlandhistory.com) for a complete listing of past shows.

To watch the current or previous episode of “Historically Speaking” in streaming video on your computer: (1) go to the Society website (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 website. 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 # 122 – Rutland “Dressed Up”. This program takes a look at selections from the Textile Collection of the Rutland Historical Society. Carolynn Ranftle is the guest commentator and Jim Davidson hosts the program.

Episode # 8 (A rerun) - This program features videotape excerpts from a program on Revolutionary War musicians that was presented at the Rutland Historical Society by George Behnke and two young reenactors. The program explains the uniforms and equipment worn and the use of music for signalling troop actions. A number of musical selections by fifes and drum are presented. On location camera work was by Tom Donahue.

STUDENTS HELP WITH DIGITIZATION

On June 8th students participating in Rutland’s YES (Year End Studies) program volunteered at the Society. Supporting one of the Society’s digitization initiatives, two students scanned photos into the computer, giving us digital images of prints previously developed from our early glass plate negative collection. During breaks they enjoyed looking for family relatives in old yearbooks. All in all it was a productive day and hopefully the students enjoyed it as well.



COMMITTEE CORNER

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Curator

Jim Davidson –
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Robert Perkins –
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773-7525

Publications Committee

Jake Sherman –
775-2784

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Rosemary Bradley –
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Website Committee

Doreen McCullough –
776-5232

EXCERPTS FROM THE SOCIETY'S 2012 VERMONT HISTORY EXPO EXHIBIT

The Sharpshooters

The Green Mountain State furnished more than six hundred and twenty superior marksmen, two lieutenant colonels, and a number of other officers, a greater proportion of its population than any other state. The government agreed to pay each man who used his own rifle \$60, or to use a rifle provided. Usually the sharpshooters were deployed on the flanks of the main force. Their function was to keep the officers pinned down and to harass artillery and prevent their deployment.

Weapons

Many Civil War soldiers carried the 1842 musket (produced by the US armories at Springfield, Massachusetts and Harpers Ferry, Virginia) until more modern weapons were issued. The Colt Revolving Rifle was produced by the Colt Firearms Manufacturing Company. It was 50 inches long, weighed almost 10 pounds, shot a .56 caliber bullet, and came equipped with a bayonet. The Sharps Breech loading rifle was issued in June 1862 and replaced the Colt Revolving Rifle. It was a single shot rifle, which was 47 inches long, weighed 8¾ pounds, shot a .52 caliber bullet, and came equipped with a bayonet.

Qualification

"Each one using a common rifle with plain open sights will be required to make ten consecutive shots from a firm rest, at a target of 200 yards distant – in each case the sum of the distance of all shots from the centre of the bull's eye not to exceed 50 inches measuring from the centre of each shot separately to the centre of the bull's eye." – *Rutland Weekly Herald*, September 5, 1861, p.2

Peck Account of Qualification from "The History of Ira, Vermont," Simon L. Peck.

"In the morning of the day set for the test, two boys, brothers, go down from the hills with a horse and buggy, and, after hitching their horse under the Meeting House shed in the village, with their rifles saunter down to the fairgrounds, where they find a large crowd of people who had assembled to witness the shooting....

When the targets were in place and the distance measured, the elder of the boys stepped to the line and, carefully loading his rifle, commenced firing. The first shot was a little wild, but inside the ring;

so were all the ten consecutive shots, many of them being almost in the center of the target. The younger of the boys then walked to the line, and, although somewhat nervous at first, he succeeded in placing ten bullets within the ring. As each shot was fired and the target master placed a black patch over the bullet hole, in the white target, a cheer went up from the crowd, which encouraged the boys in their efforts."

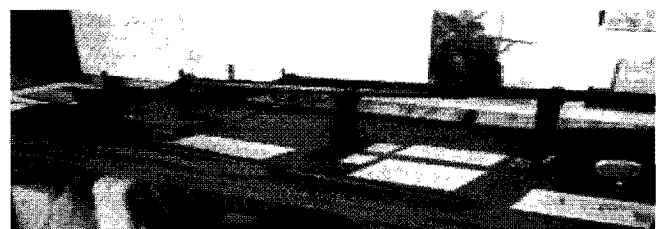
Charles Mead Letter to Peck at the Barre Academy on October 21, 1860

"Think you that the spirit of liberty is dead in the hearts of Africa's sons....Think you that that spark is extinguished in the heart of the Black? Far from it. It lies there as it ever did in our forefathers' hearts, and were it not made dormant by the oppression of mind and soul, it would kindle and blaze with such a fierce wrath as would drive forever from America's shores all traces of so deep a crime as that of slavery."

Rutland's Sharpshooters

Information and photos of five of Rutland's Sharpshooters (Ebson Wiltsey Hindes, Martin Van Buren Bronson, Charles B. Mead, Carlos Eugene Mead, and William Y. H. Ripley) appeared on the display board.

Below are images of a family enjoying the game and the weapons' display.



SOCIETY OUTREACH

WEBSITE REPORT

On March 26 Jim Davidson attended a Vermont Historical Society session in Rutland led by its new director. This was part of a series of meetings seeking feedback from the various local communities of Vermont. On April 4 Jim and his wife Helen presented the video program on the Flood of 1927 for the TRIAD program at the Godnick Center. On April 24 Jim Davidson presented a program on "The History of Industry in Rutland County" for the Vermont Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired at Pittsford, Vermont. During April Bill Powers cleaned and raked the June Cemetery at Hawk Hill in Brandon. On April 29 Bill Powers took Dave Lacy, the Green Mountain Forest Archaeologist, and others to the site of the 1957 aircraft crash in Chittenden. On April 30 Jim and Helen Davidson attended the PEG-TV Annual Meeting where Jim, acting for the Society's Board of Directors, presented a certificate of appreciation to PEG-TV and its individual staff for years of service. On May 6 the Society participated in the Loyalty Day Parade. On June 9 Bill Powers made a presentation on "The Search for N. Richardson" at Mount Independence, Orwell, Vermont. On June 10 Bill Powers made a presentation on "The 1957 Aircraft Crash in Chittenden" for the Pittsford Historical Society. On June 11 he gave the naturalist from Branbury Beach at Lake Dunmore a historical tour of the east side of Lake Dunmore including the former Sucker Brook sawmill complex, the old coal road to Goshen, the Diversion Dam in Goshen, and Silver Lake in Leicester. On July 6 Jim Davidson presented the video "David Sawyer's World" for the Colvin Family dinner at the Italian-American Club in Rutland. He also made a power point presentation of images of people and places of interest to the Colvin Family members.

Historical Resources – Rutland Directories from 1872 to 1925 have been reduced in size to make downloading faster. West Rutland Town Reports (1888 to 1999) are now available in this section as are the Rutland Town Selectmen's Reports (1857 to 1894) and the Village of Rutland Reports (1868 to 1893). In the Historical Resources Section the website now links the viewer to Vermont Newspapers recently digitized on the Library of Congress website. These include: Rutland Herald (1836 to 1847); Rutland County Herald (1848 to 1850); Rutland Herald (1850 to 1852); Rutland County Herald (1852 to 1855); and the Rutland Daily Globe (1873 to 1877).

Image Gallery – A new addition to the Image Gallery is 90 selections from the Dr. George Marshall Lantern Slide Collection.

Quarterlies – Over 100 of the back issues of the Rutland Historical Society Quarterly are now available online in the Quarterlies Section. They are each PDF searchable. Just click on the title to view one.

Historically Speaking – Last but not least, the Society is proud to announce that it can now offer digital copies of its award-winning half-hour video programs originally produced at PEG-TV, the public access station in Rutland. To date the first six programs are available. Go to Historically Speaking and click on the maroon episode number and title. The link to archive.org, a free community resource, will bring up the show. Click on the arrow and enjoy both sound and picture. Viewers using Internet Explorer may experience a problem. If you use Google Chrome (a free download) or Mozilla Firefox (a free download) you should have no trouble viewing these programs. Apple users will find that Safari (a free download) works fine. VLC (a free download) will also work for Internet Explorer users. In time, over 100 shows will be uploaded.

SOCIETY'S WRITERS

Among the Society's members and volunteers there are many with a talent for writing. They write not only for the Society, but also contribute to community publications. This past quarter, Doreen McCullough, Web Committee Chair and Librarian at the College of St. Joseph, wrote an article for the college's *Links* magazine, "Information Literacy...and what it means to you" and Bill Powers, board member and professional genealogist, entertained us with "Summers at Lake Dunmore" in the most recent issue of *Rutland Magazine*.

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