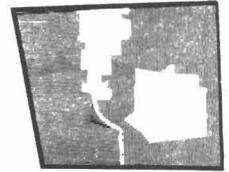


# RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Serving the original Town of Rutland chartered in 1761 and now composed of Proctor, Rutland City, Rutland Town and West Rutland.*

## Newsletter



VOL. 4 NO. 2

101 CENTER ST., RUTLAND, VT 05701

SUMMER 1987

### HANGING IN THE BALANCE

There has been much concern expressed this year about the preservation of historic buildings in Rutland, especially on North Main St.

Having been driving by just as the porch at 41 N. Main St. was being ripped off by a monster of a machine, the editor was astounded later to read about proposed "improvements" to the building for its opening as a restaurant. Drive by and decide for yourself if Rutland's architectural heritage has been compromised.

The lovely Queen Anne style building at 54 N. Main St. was the subject of a zoning variance hearing. The new owner wanted to put in three offices and three apartments but did not plan to alter the outside appearance of the building. So far nothing has been done at the site.

One of Rutland's oldest buildings, 49 N. Main Street, has been a restaurant in recent years. First the "Katsumi", then the "Governor's Table" and now the "Governor Williams House". Its exterior has not been extensively altered.

The new owners of both these restaurants received help from the society regarding the history of the buildings and, in one case, photos to copy.

65 N. Main St., the big brown shingled house that occupies the whole block has also been "fixed up" in good style. It will become office suites.

Across the street on the southeast corner of N. Main St. and Temple St. is the Burditt House which has a new owner. An elderly resident of the Sunset Home was very upset when she noticed that the handsome porches had been removed. Happily, in this case, they are being rebuilt in the original design. Wooden porches and entrance steps are always a maintenance problem.

The editor also received a call from a resident of the East Proctor Road who was worried about what might happen to the stone house on the old stretch of that road. It's great to have people taking such an interest in our historic structures.

Because there has been so much interest created in historic preservation in Rutland this year the RHS Board decided to invite Eric Gilbertson, Director of the Division of Historic Preservation of the Agency of Development and Community Affairs in Montpelier to be the guest speaker at our Annual Meeting on October 21, a Wednesday. Place to be announced. There will certainly be refreshments and all are welcome, not just members of the society.

One hesitates to say that Rutland's future is hanging in the balance, but with mall proposals in all directions out of town, the future of the Fairgrounds, lack of strong zoning laws, tax base questions, the importance of our historic built environment and yes, downtown parking, where to next?

### WHAT A SURPRISE!

Surprises - It is great fun to be in a historical society and receive a letter such as the following:

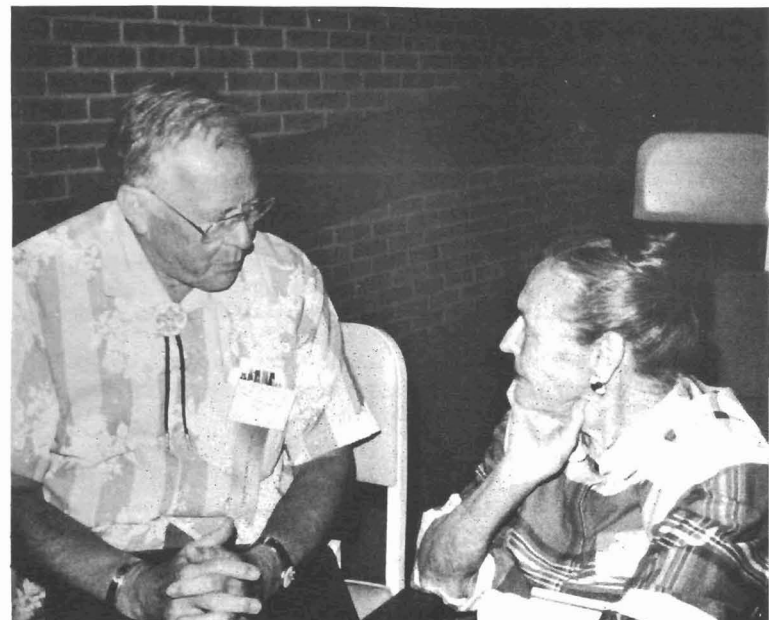
"Dear Librarian:

I am an English Professor at a small public university in Northern California. I have a collection of letters, mostly from the late 1850's, by a Rutland silversmith named Bradbury M. Bailey. He is writing his wife who is dying of consumption in Illinois. Many of these letters contain material associated with the history of Rutland. Bailey writes clear, educated prose.

Can you tell me anything about Bailey? Are there records of his silver work in Rutland? Do you have a file of local newspapers from the 1855-1860 period? Is there someone in Rutland who would be particularly interested in this topic?"

Indeed we could! Those of you who have a copy of "Rutland in Retrospect" look on page 12 for examples of Bailey's work which the society owns.

Lilian Baker Carlisle of Burlington discusses Bailey in her book "Vermont Clockmakers and Silversmiths". But can you imagine what it means to find letters such as these - totally unknown to us - out in California? It will be a perfect tidbit to include in our first volume of the Rutland history which we plan to publish. That volume is to cover the early history to 1860.



Sanborn Partridge, treasurer of RHS and Lilian Baker Carlisle of Burlington, author of Vermont Clockmakers and Silversmiths at VHS Annual Meeting.

## OUR 5th AWARD of MERIT

The League of Local Historical Societies of VHS met this year for the first time outside of Montpelier in Weston on April 25th. A feature every year is a competition in various categories intended to encourage the local societies by recognizing their achievements over the past year. We entered our first Quarterly for 1987, about the sculptor Aristide John Piccini and received the Award of Merit for Publications. Kudos to the Publications Committee.

The guest speaker was Carol Kammen, an instructor in local history at Cornell. She gave a most encouraging talk about writing on local history. She quoted at length from an address given by James Davie Butler which she thought expressed very well the purpose of doing local history.

We were delighted that she had found J.D. Butler so captivating. We later sent her a copy of our Quarterly Vol. XIV Nos. 3 & 4 about James D. Butler's recollections regarding families and houses on North and South Main Streets. She wasn't aware that he was a Rutland native.

The following quotations come from Butler's address before the Vermont Historical and Antiquarian Society at Montpelier, October 16, 1846. At the time he was Professor of History at Norwich and was much disturbed by how much of Vermont's early history was unknown, or incompletely told or had a "lack of characteristic minutiae". p.18

"Can we learn as much in regard to common schools at an early day from any of our histories, as from a single remark made to me by a woman, who had no thought of telling any great thing, that in the winter of 1780, her brother kept a school in one of the two rooms in her fathers log house in Sharon, there being then twenty-eight families in town and that there was no school for five winters afterwards! Only two of the sixty-eight settlers in Bennington made their mark; all of the 1006 petitioners to King George wrote their names, and Elkins, a boy from Peacham, when a prisoner in England, receiving a shilling a week from Dr. Franklin, paid out four coppers of it for tuition.

Do not facts like these throw light upon the popular intelligence and desire for knowledge?" p.19

"The little said in our histories in relation to religion, tends to disprove the assertion of Dr. Dwight, that 'our first settlers were chiefly universalists and infidels'. There is much to disprove it in the following details. Orthodox ministers were early settled in most towns; sermons longer than we can bear, and as searching were preached at the opening of every State Convention and Assembly; requests for prayers abound in letters, pamphlets then printed have beyond all comparison more allusions to the bible than all other books together."...

"The word of God was the law-book for all cases falling under no statute, and sentences were given according to its enactments." p.20

"I have sometimes thought our writers particularly oblivious of female heroism as displayed in our history.... A woman of Vermont suffered the same loss, (of her arm) defending her husband, with the first weapon that offered against midnight kidnappers, and is passed over in silence." p.22

(Please note that the spelling and punctuation is as it was in the original.)

## DOING LOCAL HISTORY

The American Association of State and Local History, AASLH, of which the society has been a member for some time, has been developing a series of books to help us local folks do a good job of writing our local history.

The following books are in our working library and could be borrowed to help you get started "doing history":

1. Families and Communities by David J. Russo, 1974
2. Nearby History - Exploring the Past Around You by David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, 1982
3. Local Schools - Exploring Their History by Ronald E. Butchart, 1986
4. On Doing Local History - Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why and What It Means by Carol Kammen, 1986

Doing historical research is indeed time-consuming but also it is endlessly fascinating detective work. Consider some of the requests we have had this year.

- Someone out west wondered what we knew about General William Y.W. Ripley because he is writing a book on the Civil War. We probably have more material on the Ripleys than anyone else who lived here.

- A senior at Middlebury College is doing his thesis on the Ripley Middlebury connection that included Jane Warren Ripley, the second wife of William Young Ripley. When this student was only 15 he had started studying the Ripleys by writing to our society for information.

- A new restaurant, Ripley House, on Route 4 across from the Mendon Community Church, has been built near the site of the home of General Edward Hastings Ripley. This general was a brother of General WYW and a half brother of Julia Caroline Ripley Dorr. The restaurant owner had checked to see if the society had any different Ripley pictures than he had.

- The one house for which we have a great deal of information is at 93 Center St. which was recently purchased by Charles and Doris McGinnis for their home and office.

It was built by William Gilmore in 1885 and 1886 and the society must have every bill for the building materials, labor and furnishings. Gilmore seems to have kept meticulous records. In those days you could earn between \$1.25 and \$3.00 a DAY as a laborer, carpenter or mason.

- Another inquiry related to the existence of plans for the original brick part of the old Rutland Hospital on Nichols St.

- We were able to help a woman from Burlington who is preparing an exhibit of portraits by American artists of the 18th and 19th Centuries to be shown at the Fleming Museum at UVM in the summer of 1989. The one portrait we had will require some detective work to correctly identify the artist.

- Several times this year we have provided the "before" picture that is used on page 3 in the Sunday Herald-Times Argus Magazine.



Barbara Hamblett, of the Michigan Historical Museum, guest curator of the Marbleized Slate exhibit at the Vermont Historical Society Museum. She was the guest speaker at the VHS Annual Meeting.

#### ● THE AMERICAN LIBERTY ELM ●

The Rutland Historical Society has endorsed a proposal to commemorate Vermont's Bicentennial by planting 100 disease resistant Liberty Elm trees in Rutland County. This is a project of the Chamber of Commerce and is supported by other local groups.

The American Liberty Elm is a cross-pollinated clone of parent trees that have survived for many years in situations of severe disease and bark beetle pressure.

This elm is guaranteed for ten years against Dutch elm disease. The Elm Research Institute of Harrisville, NH will replace any American Liberty Elm that succumbs to D.E.D. during the first 10 years with a tree of the exact same size.

#### ORDERING INFORMATION :

4-5 foot 1st year single stem plant - 2 for \$25

If you cannot use two trees the Rutland Boy Scouts will plant one of them in a public place. Perhaps you would like to donate \$25 so two trees could be planted in a public area. For more information CONTACT:

Rachel Keyser, 29 Chatterton Park, Proctor  
459-2940  
Rutland Historical Society, 773-3417

Among our truly valient members are those who have plunged right in this year to clean up the Farm Museum buildings at the Fairgrounds to be ready for the Fair. The society owes a big debt of gratitude to Helen Davidson, Eleanor Elwert, Ann Livak Glagola and Minerva Seward Lamboy.

#### INFORMATION NEEDED BY THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Recollections about events, organizations and pastimes during the early and middle years of this century are needed for a year-long series of radio programs called "The Green Mountain Chronicles", which will examine history through the memories of the people who participated in it.

For example: Early automobile travel up to 1920; Camp Vail alumni memories; President Coolidge; early 4-H activities; CCC enrollees; Federal Writers Project participants; Dewey Day celebrations; any turn of the century memories. Any other memories? Write the Vermont Historical Society, 109 State St., Montpelier, VT 05602. 828-2291.

(NOTICE PLEASE)- We have stapled into this issue a caption strip to be applied over the caption on page 50 of the West Rutland Centennial issue of the Quarterly, Vol. XVII No. 2 1987.

We have been fortunate in not having to suffer many typographical errors over the years. This was a big one - not the fault of the publication committee however. Our apologies for the inconvenience. Even so, we could always use more helpers on that committee and in many other ways in the society.

## Rutland Architecture Book

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation hopes to soon proceed with the printing of its State Register of Historic Places publication, The Historic Architecture of Vermont: Rutland County.

To make the book as widely useful as possible both individual town pamphlets and a bound county volume of over 450 pages will be printed. There will be a brief history of each town; everything listed in the State Register of Historic Places will be marked on maps or with street addresses. Photographs of the outstanding landmarks in each town and a guide to the styles and dating of Vermont's historic architecture will be included. This will be the first volume in the series that is expected to cover every county in the state.

To help the society make an educated guess as to how many copies we could sell we ask that you fill in the coupon below and mail to us. There is absolutely no obligation whatsoever to you. The entire county volume will cost about \$25, the single Rutland city pamphlet would be about \$8 and the other towns would be between \$3 and \$8.

Mail to: Rutland Historical Society  
101 Center St., Rutland, VT 05701

Yes, I would be interested in:

1. ☐ Rutland County volume
2. ☐ Rutland City volume only
3. ☐ Other Rutland County towns, \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Sept. 17 - Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution

Oct. 21 - Annual Meeting of the Rutland Historical Society. Eric Gilbertson, Director of the Division of Historic Preservation will be the guest speaker - all welcome, place to be announced.

Now until Dec. 31 - Exhibit on the Marbleized Slate Industry at VHS Museum in Montpelier.



Rev. David J. Dean and wife, Joan at the Sing-along July 31st.

**SING-ALONG** - The date had to be shifted to the last Friday in July instead of the first one in August but it was a success. The lemonade stand was super busy with 2 cent a cup drinks. And we were complimented with the sincerest form of flattery - imitation of the Sing-along. The recreation director in Easton, MA happened to read about our sing-along while vacationing in Vermont and promptly decided to copy it for a fund-raising event in his town.

**READING OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS** - This project is being coordinated by Tom Egan and is intended to be a patriotic observance. Each person has a copy of the document and it is read alternately by the men and women. It was done at the Sing-along and at the evening grandstand events at the Vermont State Fair in Rutland. Various community leaders took part in the readings. Quick Print donated the 30,000 copies needed for the fair.

## RUTLAND'S EARLY BURIAL GROUNDS

Finally, after years of pleading, the city has erected fences at the West St. and North Main St. cemeteries. Cemetery Commissioners had tried in previous administrations to protect these historic burial grounds to no avail. Following persistent pressure by Dawn Hance, one of the commissioners, the Aldermen voted to provide the funds.

The cemetery commissioners have also voted to have the gravestones repaired at a cost of \$8000, but not all of this money is available. What a fine gesture it would be if interested citizens would send donations to the city treasurer for this purpose.

Among the early notable Rutlanders buried in West St. cemetery are Gov. Israel Smith; William Storer, an early silversmith; banker William Fay; and clockmaker Nicholas Goddard.

Buried at North Main St. are the joint founders and owners of the Rutland Herald, Rev. Samuel Williams and Judge Samuel Williams. Col. James Claghorn is also buried there. Many Revolutionary War veterans are buried in both cemeteries.

A detail from the Rutland Community Correctional Center worked on improving the grounds at North Main St. with direction from DPW street superintendent Henry Monaco.

## NECROLOGY

**George J. Covalt** - The first treasurer of the society died Oct. 23, 1984. Born in Oklahoma in 1900 he graduated from the Wharton School of Business and was a CPA. He and his wife Dorothy were active for many years in the work of the RHS.

**Ruth French** - Miss French died April 10, 1986. A graduate of UVM in 1927 she taught high school English in Vermont, Massachusetts and New Jersey. At her retirement in 1973 she was head of the English department in the Atlantic City High School. Her interests included the DAR and dramatics, the latter included a role in "Indomitable Women of Vermont".

**Vera Egelston** - She died April 1, 1987 at the age of 95. One of the original members of RHS she was active on the Hospitality Committee and dedicated to the work of the society. A graduate of Syracuse University, she taught at the Rutland Business College, founded by her father, Lewellyn J. Egelston, and at Rutland High School for 28 years.

## RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

101 Center Street  
Rutland, Vermont 05701

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86 one year in arrears    87 current    L life membership