

Under the Hump

SOCIETY BUSINESS

NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting:
Tues., Nov. 21st, 7 pm,
CBMS Library

- Wreath sale is underway! Place your order now!
- Annual bake sale is November 10th.

Mystery Photo
or
Trivia Question?

Do you have a photo or trivia question we can feature in an upcoming newsletter? Please submit to the newsletter committee and we will place it in the next available issue.

Our next DHS meeting will be Tuesday, November 21st, 7 pm, in the Crossett Brook Middle School library. After the business meeting, attendees are invited to share a story about an artifact, document, or historical event. Refreshments will be served.

Reminder: Dues expire December 31, 2023. Dues for 2024 are being accepted. Please mail your dues to Mark Morse, Treasurer (see back of newsletter), which will help defray postage costs of reminders. If you have already submitted your dues please disregard this notice. A reminder will be sent nearer the December 31st deadline.

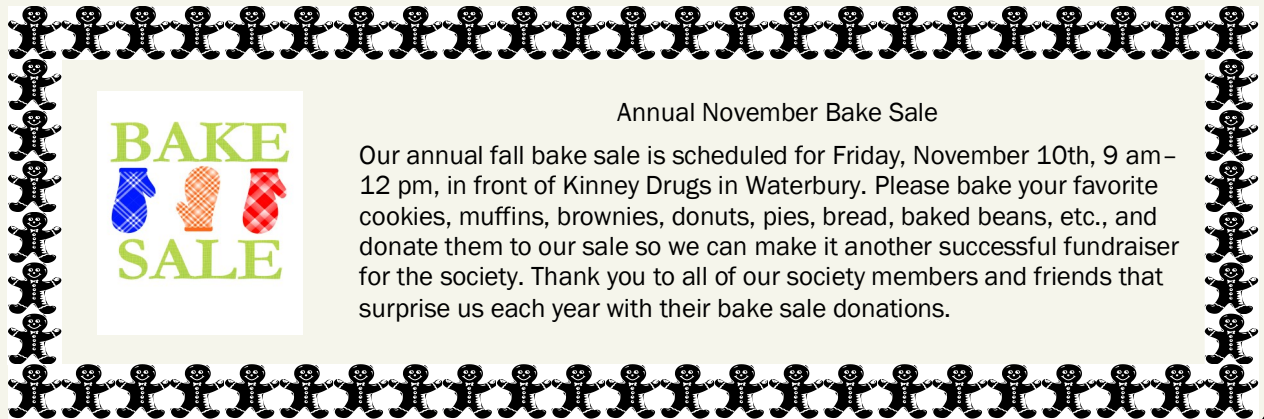
Wreath Sale

Our annual wreath sale is on again for this year! Call Mark Morse at 244-7080 or Shawn Perry at 244-6496 to reserve your order. Wreaths this year will cost \$22.00 each. We will also have mailing boxes available for your convenience at \$4.00 each. Everything else will remain the same as last year.



Annual November Bake Sale

Our annual fall bake sale is scheduled for Friday, November 10th, 9 am-12 pm, in front of Kinney Drugs in Waterbury. Please bake your favorite cookies, muffins, brownies, donuts, pies, bread, baked beans, etc., and donate them to our sale so we can make it another successful fundraiser for the society. Thank you to all of our society members and friends that surprise us each year with their bake sale donations.



SOCIETY BUSINESS

Archival/Preservation Committee Report

Members: Eulie Costello, Lori Morse, Bonnie Morse, Mark Morse

- Mark & Christian Magnani provided research assistance for a descendant of John Baptiste Shonio.

Donated Artifacts/Documents/Ephemera

- July 1943 photo of Co. 'C', 12th BN at Camp Wheeler, GA – Linda Sherman.
- December 3, 1918 photo of 12th Division at Camp Devens, MA – Linda Sherman.
- Waterbury Jr & Sr High School student photo, circa 1950 – Linda Sherman.
- Antique Wooden Post Maul from the former Breen farm on Crossett Hill – Steve Grace.
- 2 Crosscut Saws & 1 Buck Saw from the former Fred Ravlin Mill at Duxbury Corner – Jerry Paige.

Monetary Donations Including the Annual Appeal as of 10-13-23

Naomi Alfini & David Wendt
Skip & Cathy Flanders
Joyce & James Gingras
Ramona Godfrey

Kim Greenwood
James Hanley
Brenda Hartshorn
Stephanie Koonz

Theresa & Roy Marshall
Mame McKee
Bill Morse
Sue & David Rogers

Our annual August picnic was held on August 20th at the South Duxbury Church property. It was the perfect day to catch up with neighbors and friends. The door prize was won by Bill Morse.

Our "Let's Make a Deal" Lawn Sale and Bake Sale was held on September 9th at the South Duxbury Church property. Thank you to everyone who made the sale a success from donating items and food, to volunteering their time at the sale, to shopping at the sale. We raised about \$1400!



Alison Magnani photo.

"Let's Make a Deal" Lawn Sale and Bake Sale.

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

It could have been worse for Duxbury. Some of our townspeople experienced high water during the flood event of July 10-11. However, the water level was lower than with Hurricane Irene in 2011. Further up the Winooski it was higher during this year's event. At our property in South Duxbury the drainage was excellent and there were no impacts. The Society did not need to respond with organizational assistance to our neighbors like we did in 2011. Still it made us think how our improved community hall might serve this purpose in the future.

We can all thank ourselves for the generous gifts we gave during the spring appeal to members. About \$7000 was raised! All of this will be used to develop and maintain our new home. It is anticipated that some of it will become matching funds for grants. It's a good start, but we are planning more fundraisers and campaigns in the coming year. We appreciate your generosity.

Our traditional fall "Let's Make a Deal" sale was a success as well. It was great to have our community hall for storage of contributions, but it was uncertain how the change in venue would affect sales. It turned out that the intake of about \$1400 was comparable to past years. Many thanks to those who contributed their former keepsakes, baked goods, and their time.

The electrical upgrade for the DHS Meeting House (formerly the South Duxbury Church) is being completed as this issue is being prepared. Washington Electric Co-op installed our larger transformer earlier in the summer, and now the actual upgrade of the meeting house panel is being completed. We look forward to being able to host events in the autumn and spring with warmth from our new electric heaters. While we had the excavator on the premises we had test pits dug and evaluated for a future septic system. Pictures of some of the activity are included here.

At our meeting on September 5 the building committee unanimously voted to have a basement addition to Sunshine Hall be the first option for future storage of the DHS archive. Our architect, Joe Greene, will be developing a concept of how to accomplish this along with an addition for bathroom facilities and an entranceway. The current floor plan of open meeting space and kitchen would remain with modernization. These upgrades to the Sunshine Hall will greatly assist in making the Meeting House a useful event space. Historic preservation will be the guiding principle for the Meeting House. Any plans we might have for changes to the Sunshine Hall are severely constrained by property boundaries and its proximity to Route 100.

We had a fine time at the August picnic...but we should have rung the bell!! We are marking the one year anniversary of our property acquisition. We have spruced it up a bit and had a few memorable events there. We are trying to make the doors open more for people to discover. There haven't been any big changes yet, but we are finding our way towards making it the place we want it to be.

~Submitted by Ken Spencer



Christian Magnani photo.



Christian Magnani photo.



Ken Spencer photo.

AN UNSUNG HERO AMONG US

An Unsung Hero Among Us
By Steve Grace

In the cold winter weeks of January, 1949, an incident occurred at the Crossett Hill one-room schoolhouse which played on my mind and caused me to have nightmares for a long, long time. It is worth recalling this incident and bringing to light that frightening day because it shed light on a heroic action by one of our own members of the Duxbury Historical Society, Ralph Ainsworth. Ralph was known by me, his classmates, and his neighbors at that time as Ralph Murphy. I'm assuming that using his former name in this narrative will not offend Ralph. I know my friend Ralph well and I don't think he will be offended.

In those days, the old one-room schoolhouse was heated by a single huge stove in the back of the room, far enough away from the back wall to be safe from set-

ting the place on fire. By morning, the place was as cold as a barn - yesterday's fire in the stove might as well have been a month ago. It was the custom of the time for one of the older kids in school to come in early in the morning in the cold winter months, well before the teacher arrived, and start a roaring fire in the stove. The student was paid a trifling amount for these duties. Ralph Murphy who had a deserved reputation as a level-headed, responsible student had this job for the 1948-1949 school year.

On a particularly cold morning in January of 1949, Ralph walked to school and started a fire, a fierce one and a welcome one to us students who started arriving at school. My brother John, sister Marjorie, and I trudged in and cozied up to the stove - the only place in the room that was not freezing cold. Other students arrived, all of us before the teacher arrived, one of the students being a little girl, Eleanor Pelkey. Eleanor, like the rest of



Crossett Hill School, 1948-49. The teacher was Marianna (Beaton) Towne.

Photo was the courtesy of Steve Grace by Marianna Towne.

Left to right: Don Pelkey, Ralph Ainsworth, Robert Murphy, Marjorie Grace, Elaine Clark ?, Rebecca Waterhouse, Freda Morse, Laura Murphy, Charlene Clark, Steve & John Grace.

Image from *Cause of the Will* by Donald R. Welch, 2008, p. 86.

AN UNSUNG HERO AMONG US

us, crowded up next to the stove – we must have looked like a brood of hungry chickens around a feeder.

All of a sudden, someone smelled smoke and Eleanor screamed. It seems her flowing dress was sucked into the damper as the fire was sucking air from the room to feed the flames. And her dress was afire! I recall vividly my fright and, I guess I must admit, my cowardice. I was a second grader at the time and was frightened beyond description. I remember diving onto the floor and under one of our double desks.

And now, instead of my recall, I quote exactly an article from the Barre Daily Times of January 10, 1949:

“Score a victory for the Duxbury school boy, Ralph Murphy, who, when the clothing of a 9-yr-old school-mate, Eleanor Pelkey, caught fire in the schoolroom before the arrival of the teacher, seized the girl as she was running out of the building, wrapped a heavy coat about her, and thus extinguished the flames that had already consumed much of the girl’s clothing and burned her body considerably. The boy’s presence of mind undoubtedly saved the girl from more serious burns, if not from death. The boy is greatly to be commended for his prompt and effective actions...”

Eleanor recovered from her burns but not before a long hospitalization and recovery period. I have never heard Ralph brag about this event or paint himself as a hero. He was a tough, mature kid for his age, a Crossett

Hill farm kid, and his instincts were right on the mark in that desperate situation - he went into action. And I can assure you, he’s still a great guy. He remains a heroic figure to me and to my sister who witnessed this near tragedy and he was similarly respected and admired by my deceased brother, John, who was there in that classroom.



Ralph Ainsworth, Janet Ainsworth, Marianna Towne, and Shawn Perry at the August 2009 DHS picnic. Photo from Under the Hump, Issue 15.

RECIPES TO SHARE

The recipes below are from *My Joy of Baking* by Helen B. Davis.

Chicken Corn Chowder with Cheese

Ingredients: 2Tbsp.butter or margarine, 1/3c.chopped celery, 1/3c.chopped red bell pepper, 1 1/2Tbsp.all-purpose flour, 2c.milk, 1can (14 3/4oz.) cream style corn, 1 1/3c.French Fried Onions, divided, 1c.cooked, diced cooked chicken, 2Tbsp.chopped chilies, 1/2c. (2oz.) shredded cheddar cheese. Melt butter in 3 quart saucepan on medium high heat. Sauté celery and bell pepper 3 minutes or until crisp – tender. Blend in flour; cook 1 minute stirring constantly. Gradually stir in milk and corn. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer 4 minutes or until thickened, stirring frequently. Add 2/3c.French fried onions, chicken and chilies. Cook until heated through. Spoon soup into serving bowl; sprinkle with remaining onions and cheese. Spread on Frank’s Red Hot Sauce to taste if desired. Serves: 4

Vegetable Chowder

Ingredients: 1c.chopped celery (3stalks), 1c.choopped onion (1large), 1clove of garlic, minced, 1/4c.margarine, 4c.beef bouillon, 3c.chopped potatoes (4medium), 1 (17oz.) can whole kernel corn, 1 (16oz.) can tomatoes, 2c.sliced carrots, 1/2tsp. each of celery seed, thyme and salt, 2Tbsp. cornstarch and 1/4c.water. Sauté celery, onion and garlic in margarine in stockpot. Add next 8 ingredients. Simmer covered; for 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in mixture of cornstarch and 1/4c.water. Bring to a boil over medium heat; stirring constantly. Cook for 1 minute longer. Serves: 6

WHEN CHRISTMAS CAME TO SCRABBLE HILL

When Christmas Came to Scrabble Hill
By: Frances LeBourveau (Stockwell) Lovell

Editor's Note: Frances taught at one time at the school on Blush Hill in Waterbury. In this story, we don't believe she is referring to Scrabble Hill School in Duxbury although many Vermont town schools would fit the description. Most of the children attending Scrabble Hill School in Duxbury would have been Irish Catholic.

It was a blowsy little school house, grey as time, perched on a side hill, where each gust of wind threatened to send it sailing into the valley below. The year was 1917 and rural teachers were at a premium in this lonely part of Vermont where the Hogback's jagged lumps loomed on one side and the great crouching mass of Camel's Hump brooded on the other.

It was only my second school, I'd started teaching all nine grades in a tiny, pleasant community with card parties, box socials and dances at the Grange, sliding and sleigh rides on winter nights. We gave plays under kerosene lamps and enjoyed most advantages of larger village schools. On Scrabble Hill I learned that (hillfolk) Adventists did not go in for socializing and others had no time.

This barren hill country with threadbare farms clinging to stony slopes like fungus on a tree, hit me in the pit of my stomach. When my mother went chugging back home to Montpelier in the old Stanley Steamer, that first September day, I sat down in my cold bedroom and wept. The wash bowl and pitcher leered at me from an oak commode, "This is real country, just wait 'til you have to dress beside a chunk stove in the living room with the rest of the family and take your baths in a wash tub in the kitchen." They didn't mention snowshoeing to school.

My students, on that first day of school, waited curiously in the yard as I walked into the little hallway where the water pail and dipper stood in one corner and lunch pails were stacked against the wall. In the school room my blackboard was not slate, erasers non-existent, the books had been used by whole families. All my searching could not turn up a music book, a paint box or a single crayon.

I rang the bell vigorously. The children's faces peered at me from scarred desks which wore the initials of parents and grandparents. Some were French and Indian, their father was a trapper and logger and wore big round bear paw snowshoes in the woods, there were seven Scotch Americans poor as Job's turkey, and some older boys who stayed home from time to time as farm work required.

It did not take me long to learn that no one on Scrabble Hill had ever had or ever expected to have anything but the three R's in that drab little room. Coloring & painting? Music & singing? They had never bothered with them. Didn't have time. "No teacher here ever fussed around with such foolishness!" was the dictum of one father scowling over a bristling mustache. My spirits dropped like a pail in a well.

But that night, walking home with sunset in the sky and smell of new fallen apples in the grass and new dug potatoes in the ploughed pieces, my Yankee stubbornness took over. It teamed up with my love of drawing and color and music. My chin went up, I would bring those things into my little grey school! I'd see the superintendent on Friday night when I drove down in the buggy to take the train for home.

So I saw the superintendent, a tall thin Yankee whose idea of a district school was as little as possible of anything. "No frills; it's the taxpayers money." But I was almost as tall as he was and twice as Yankee. I intended to have frills and maybe ruffles. I told him children needed these things, it was part of their heritage. Then I told him I was going to buy song books, and colored paper, and paints and a pitch pipe (which I wasn't sure I knew how to use) and bring them when I returned on the milk train. I got them too, though it was against his better judgement and I carried my supplies triumphantly up the hill on Monday. The children loved it, we sang every song in the books, we colored autumn leaves and drew pictures on everything in the room including the blackboard.

Then it got to be a few weeks before Christmas. Children I knew lived from one beautiful Christmas holiday to the next. But suddenly, I found that on Scrabble Hill it was just another day. Maybe a new pair of mittens or boots. Maybe a red toque to keep your ears warm when blizzards screamed down off the Hump.

"Christmas trees?" I inquired, No, just another day when they didn't have to go to school but could work in the barn or the field.

So Christmas began that year as soon as the last Thanksgiving chicken or salt pork was out of the way. It would be the last Friday of school, I told them, and on that day there would be no lessons. We would get things shipshape in the morning and hold open house in the afternoon. Several children were not at all sure that any house should be left open in such cold weather! We would have singing and tableaux and Santa himself would be there.

For a week we lived Christmas, during school the little children made red paper stars to hang on a tree and bigger ones curled up cornucopias to hold candles. So much popcorn was strung that the mice had a field day every night. We decorated with greens which came in by the sack full from the winter woods; ground hemlock, running pine, spruce and hemlock boughs. We twined and twisted them around the windows 'til we could hardly see to read on dark days, for there was no electricity or gaslight on Scrabble Hill.

WHEN CHRISTMAS CAME TO SCRABBLE HILL

Certain parents, I heard, were doubtful about all these preparations "on school time." Our tree stood in the farthest corner where the wind crept through its branches and swung the tin stars and popcorn chains. Red apples tied on lower branches froze solid the first night, even mice couldn't make a dent in them.

Then in the midst of our excited cutting, painting and wreath making, came a knock on the door one blustery morning, and in walked the superintendent for his periodic visit; several weeks early. Could he have been warned by a skeptical parent that we were sidestepping the 3 R's for 'light-minded foolishness?' I wondered weakly. I didn't find out because I talked long and fast, until he left in puzzled silence. If he thought Scrabble Hill was getting out of hand, he kept it to himself.

The great day dawned clear and much too cold. I blew on snowy, uncooperative twigs to start our stove while my breath hung like goose feathers in the air. By the time the children had kicked snow from their heavy boots, I'd got maple chunks snapping and a few square feet near the stove dimly habitable. Usually, I made cocoa and heated up stewed tomatoes on the stove at noon to go with the children's cold slabs of pie or biscuit. Today the cocoa would come later, for our company.....if anyone came.

Red stockings which the girls had industriously sewed were each stuffed with tangerines (cheaper than oranges), a little dime store candy and a box of pencils. We rehearsed all morning, taking turns near the stove, the shepherds wearing their mittens and mufflers, the Wise men practiced balancing their towel turbans and singing "I saw three ships come sailing."

As soon as lunch was swallowed, hands washed in icy brook water and hair slicked back, the whole school squeezed into the seats on one side of the room, and waited shivering, for their hesitant and embarrassed parents to arrive and squeeze into the remaining seats. Actors and actresses waited their cues out in the bitterly cold hall.

Cakes of every hue and construction began to appear on my desk, sandwiches stacked like cordwood - good substantial sandwiches too, filled with cold meat everyone had just finished butchering, or apple butter spicy with cinnamon and nutmeg. I set the cocoa on the stove and hoped my eager actors would not knock it on the floor.

I asked the parents to sing with us. Scowls vanished, faces lit up, though my pitch pipe never agreed with their harmony nor they with each other; the roof rang! Tableaus went off on time, though Mary dropped the infant Jesus once and also scorched her blue robe. Joseph had to double as an angel in the next tableau since we were short of angels on Scrabble Hill. I helped Santa into his suit, but since his mouth was covered with cotton whiskers he couldn't talk so I helped distribute the presents.

Exhausted by then, I was trying to figure out how to clean up the mess and catch the train for home that same night, when someone handed me a package. Everyone including the parents watched with wide grins, when out of the red tissue paper fell my long coveted brown suede copy of Tennyson. That was 40 years ago and I still have that book by my bed.

Before the last cake crumbs were brushed from laps, the last bread crusts tossed into the stove, men, women, and the children were in a dizzy maelstrom sweeping, burning, setting the room to rights and carrying the rest away.

So when the last sled carried its load down the hill, I too, was on my way to the train station behind old Nellie brushing her white hairs off my brown coat.

"Such a Christmas, teacher!" ringing in my ears.

RECIPES TO SHARE

The recipe below is from *My Joy of Baking* by Helen B. Davis.

Christmas Braid Loaves

3c. flour, 1pkg.dry yeast, 2c.milk, 1/4 c. sugar, 6Tbsp. butter, 1/2tsp. salt, 1 egg, 1c.raisins, 1c.finely chopped mixed candied fruit; 1/2c.chopped nuts.

Topping: 1 egg yolk, and 1 Tbsp. water. In a large bowl, combine 3 cups flour, and the dry yeast. In a saucepan, heat the milk, 1/4c.sugar and the butter, and salt to 120-130°; add to flour mixture. Add 1 egg, and the other 1/4c.sugar. Beat at low speed, for 30 seconds; increase the speed to medium and beat 3 minutes more. Stir in raisins; chopped mixed candied fruit, the nuts, and enough more flour

to knead until smooth and elastic; 8-10 minutes. Place in greased bowl, turning to coat top. Cover and let rise 1 1/2 hours. Divide dough in thirds; then divide each, into thirds, again. Roll each piece into a 15"rope. Place 3 ropes 1" apart on a greased baking sheet. Begin braiding loosely in the middle; and work toward the end. Pinch ends together and tuck under. Repeat with other ropes. Cover and let rise until double; about 30-40 minutes. Combine the egg yolk and water; brush over the braids, carefully. Bake 350° for (20-25 minutes) or until browned. Cool on wire racks. Yields: 3 braids

D U X B U R Y H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y , I N C .
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**DON'T FORGET THE NEXT MEETING - NOV. 21ST
CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - 7 PM**

D U X B U R Y H I S T O R I C A L
S O C I E T Y , I N C .
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