

ANNUAL REPORT – September, 2008

Worcester, Vermont Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 329
Worcester, VT 05682

The purpose of the Worcester Historical Society (WHS) is to conserve the unique story of Worcester's past through education, preservation, and restoration for the benefit of our posterity. The Society's resources, collections, and archives will be used to communicate the historical and cultural legacy of Worcester and to maintain and foster our community's heritage.

The WHS was incorporated in November, 2001.

The WHS meets at the Worcester Village School (now the WHS office and meeting facility) the 2nd Thursday of every month, at 7:00 p.m. The public is always welcome to attend.

Organizational

The Board is made up of nine Directors, elected by the Membership. Each Director serves for a two-year term, with staggering terms. The Board appoints its Officers annually.

The present nine Directors, appointed Officers, and their respective terms, are:

	<u>Term Expires</u>
David Book, President	September, 2008
MaryAnn Powers, Vice President	September, 2008
Judy Knapp, Treasurer	September, 2009
Dell Waterhouse, Secretary	September, 2008
Elizabeth Schwartz	September, 2009
Douglas Hull	September, 2009
Audrey Richardson	September, 2008
Gordon Cole	September, 2008
Vivienne Adair	September, 2009

At this year's Annual Meeting, the Membership will be asked to elect five Directors. The Nominating Committee of the Board will present its recommendations.

Membership Status

The WHS currently has a total of 70 members, made up of: 17 Individual memberships; 8 Family memberships; 44 Lifetime memberships; and 1 Honorary membership. The Board tries to promote membership at all WHS programs, and many Town functions, including Town Meeting.

Annual dues of the members help to support the fiscal health of the WHS as we carry on our mission. The dues structure is as follows:

<u>Membership Type</u>	<u>Annual Dues (cover July 1 – June 30)</u>
Individual	\$10
Family	\$20
Life (individual only)	\$100
Business	\$100
Sponsor	\$500*
Patron	\$1000*
Benefactor	\$5000*

* Includes a lifetime membership and special recognition at the Annual Meeting.

Memberships may also be given as gifts.

Donations made in Memory of loved ones make very meaningful contributions to the Society.

Treasurer's Report

Please see pages 7 & 8. (not included on website)

Last Year's Activities & Projects (September, 2007 – August, 2008)

- **Renovation of the WHS building**
Our top priority over the past year continued to be the renovation of **the Worcester Village School** (also known as the White School). Michele Hill continues to lead the effort to have the **windows** and **chimney** repaired. The balance of the Grant from the Freeman Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont will cover some of the window work: 4 basement and six full-size windows (those in the worst shape). Work began in August 2008. However, the chimney repairs, done by a Pres. Trust approved contractor, will be expensive, and will be delayed until 2009.
The ultimate goal of the renovations is to expand the role of the WHS building as a resource to the citizens of our town by utilizing it as the home of the Worcester Historical Society, where we can store our growing collection, and make that collection available to the public, for research, and through exhibits and programs.

Financial Support & Fundraising:

- We were very heartened by the continued strong support of the WHS and our efforts to renovate the Village School on Town Meeting Day. A permanent budget item of **\$2,000 from the Town of Worcester** was approved.
- **Presentation by Benefactor:** At the 9/13/07 Annual Meeting, Bradley Senter and his siblings, Barbara, Terry, and Kevin, gave the WHS \$5,000 in memory of their parents, Darold and Agnes Senter. Agnes and Darold Senter and their family lived in Worcester three times; he was a road commissioner and selectman. (Cathy Hull put together a nice collection of Senter family photos and

memorabilia in one of the display cases.) Bradley presented the check on behalf of his siblings. There were no restrictions attached to this contribution. A portion of the money was used, along with other donations already received, to pay for the new Worcester Historical Society sign which was erected in front of the Village School.

Significant Fundraisers (discussed further under Projects & Programs section):

- **Town Meeting Lunch:** WHS served the meal on Town Meeting Day as a fundraiser. This was made possible through the very generous support of **Gretchen Saries** and **Greg Labarthe** of Bon Temps Gourmet.
- **Valentine card** fundraiser.
- **Love Light Tree** during the holidays.
- **Community Contra Dances** at Doty School.
- **The 4th of July: Chicken Barbecue, Quilt & Lamp Raffle.**

Projects & Programs:

WHS continues to sponsor special programs and projects, to foster interest and offer information about the history of the town of Worcester. Over the past year, these included:

- **Annual Meeting Program by Roger Hill: “1816, the Year Without a Summer”** (Sept. 13, 2007) A Potluck supper was followed by a short meeting, and then the excellent Program by meteorologist and radio personality, Roger Hill of Worcester. Attending were ~60 from Worcester and neighboring communities. The Program was recorded, and later broadcast, by ORCA Media (Montpelier-based Onion River Community Access channel on cable).
- **Program by David Schutz, Vermont State Curator: The 150th Anniversary of the Vermont Statehouse** (Oct. 13, 2007) A fascinating history of the current and earlier statehouses, and their Worcester connections.
- **2008 WHS Calendar:** an interesting Collection of Worcester People & Scenes was published in October thanks to the initiative of Cathy Hull, with the support of Gordon Cole.
- **WHS Strategic Plan:** Cathy Hull led the effort to develop a WHS Strategic Plan, which was approved at the Nov. 8, 2007 WHS meeting.
- **WHS Holiday Dinner** (Nov. 29, 2007): WHS members and friends gathered at the Minister Brook Rd. home of Gretchen Saries & Greg Labarthe (Bon Temps Gourmet) to kick off the holiday season with a delicious and festive dinner party.
- **Love Light Tree Lighting Ceremony** (Dec. 1, 2007): Audrey Richardson again organized this 2nd annual event. Tom and Judy Lang of Balsam Acres generously donated the large tree. Many lights were bought in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones. This meaningful evening raised more than twice as much as the very successful inaugural event. Quite a few people gathered on a bitterly cold evening as the names were read and carols were sung in the Village School. Hot chocolate and goodies were served in the first floor classroom, while Shelley Quinn played beautiful music of the season on her flute.

- **Contra Dances** (Nov. 2007 – Mud Season/ April 2008): Six Community Contra Dances were held in Doty Gym, reviving a history of dances in town. Enthusiastic dancers of all ages participated. “The Parsnips,” a group of traditional musicians from Worcester and the surrounding area (two of whom are WHS members), played these family dances and split the proceeds from admission with the WHS. The WHS also received donations from a refreshment table. Special events accompanied two of the Contra Dances:

March 15, 2008 **St. Patrick’s Day-theme/ Irish Ceili** - Irish Step Dancers, bagpiper Michael Close of Worcester, singers of Irish ballads, traditional Irish music. Fantastic audience participation (literally the entire gym floor was full) in learning the Irish Ceili dance, “The Rakes of Mallow”! There were many requests to make this an annual event.

April 12, 2008 **Potluck Supper and Program by Adam Boyce, “Sprightly Steps: Vermont’s Contra and Square Dancing Tradition”** - Adam (fiddler and contra dance caller) gave this talk through the sponsorship of the Vermont Humanities Council, Speakers Bureau Program.
- The 2nd annual **Valentine** fundraiser was successful once again (raising ~\$500 more than the first campaign). The Valentine cards were scanned from a vintage card in Cathy and Doug Hull’s collection. In all, more than 250 Valentines were sent to friends, family, and former Worcester residents near and far. These efforts paid off as WHS received many **donations** in return.
- **Town Meeting Lunch:** Members of the WHS hosted the lunch at Town Meeting in March, with the entrees and several large salads for the Salad Potluck generously prepared and donated by **Bon Temps Gourmet (Gretchen Saries & Greg Labarthe)**, as a fundraiser for the Society. Thanks also to **The North Branch Grange** (for use of their coffee urn and beverage containers, silverware, condiments, etc.) and **Price Chopper** on the Barre-Montpelier Rd. for gift card donations.
- **Ringing the bell** to celebrate **graduation of 6th graders:** a tradition (which began last year) on the final day of school. All Doty students gathered on the front lawn of the Village School as the members of the graduating 6th grade class each took a turn ringing the bell!
- **Teddy Bear Picnic** (June 22, 2008): Audrey Richardson shared many of the bears in her collection in an adorable display in the WHS building, which especially delighted the children. Sandy Mann made and served delicious refreshments for the occasion.
- **4th of July Celebration & Chicken Barbecue:** WHS members played an integral role in organizing and orchestrating Worcester’s 4th of July Celebration. During the day, the Society served the traditional **chicken barbecue** (as a fundraiser), organized other fundraising activities (Duck Race), and presented exhibits (“**Worcester’s Civil War Warriors**” to accompany the new WHS publication by WHS president, **David Book**; Senter Family Memorabilia; and Dick Dodge’s Vintage Toys). The day ended with a fabulous fireworks display, thanks to Suzanne Mancinelli, who organized a successful Local Trade Show in Doty Gym on May 17 to fund the Fireworks (WHS donated a variety pack of merchandise and an annual membership as part of the Silent Auction fundraiser), and the 4th of July Committee, which has been a subcommittee of the WHS for the past several years. Judy Knapp was honored to write a message on a canister (the last one to go up on the 4th) to Steve Pryce,

Northstar employee, who died following the display in 2006. Also, **thank you to the Worcester Volunteer Fire Department** for **erecting and taking down our flags** that line Worcester Village Road; they have been doing this since our Bicentennial, and we would like to recognize them.

- **4th of July WHS Benefit Quilt & Lamp Raffle:** This successful fundraiser was made possible through the generosity of two WHS members. Cathy Hull made and donated a Civil War era replica pattern Queen Size Quilt, and Gordon Cole made and donated a Lamp with a handmade cherry frame and his beautiful illuminated nature photos (taken in Worcester).
- **Stage Curtain Restoration Project:** Michele Hill and David Book negotiated with the Middlesex Historical Society for the loan (until the MHS has an appropriate place to display it) of a historic painted stage curtain. The curtain was restored and will be kept rolled up above the stage in the Worcester Town Hall. On special occasions, once the Town Hall renovations are complete, and the second floor is accessible (in 2009), the curtain may be unrolled for display. The curtain has many Montpelier area advertisements, which would have been appropriate for Worcester as well. Worcester had a similar stage curtain (used as a backdrop), but it has not been found.
- **WHS Collection of artifacts and documents** continues to expand. Thanks to David and Maida Maxham, the Walter and Ladd families, and Lyndy Wells, our permanent collection continues to grow. The Maxhams contributed six unique items from the Maxham store that stood across from the Town Hall. The Walter/Ladd families have contributed wonderful pictures of the Ladd dairy farm on Gould Hill, a safe used by Joseph and Edna Ladd in that operation and numerous items on loan. Lyndy donated documents and other items when she was cleaning out the Town Clerk's office before she retired this spring.
- The **WHS website** (www.worcestervthistoricalsociety.org) continues to be an important communication tool. Many thanks to Susan Premo for creating, and maintaining, a web presence for the Worcester Historical Society. Our web page features upcoming events, information regarding membership, the Newsletters, Publications/merchandise offered by the Society, etc.
- **Semi-annual Newsletter:** The Society continues to publish a newsletter, now twice a year, to inform our membership of our activities. The newsletter is also posted on the WHS website.
- **Community newsletter, "The Grapevine":** WHS is a collaborating organization, and Judy Knapp represents The Society as a reporter.

Things to watch for

Committees made up of Directors and interested community members will continue their work on **publications, archiving, programs, genealogy, oral history, facilities & grounds, & fundraising.** Here are some things to watch for:

- Look for **more programs**, at least quarterly, presented by WHS, during the coming year.

- **Rafael Bettmann-Kerson's Memorial** apple tree (in front of the Village School): his mother, Sue Bettmann, plans to install a plaque on the tree, carved by her daughter, Sophie.
- **Program by David Book, WHS President, on his publication about Worcester in the Civil War.**
- **Contra Dances** at Doty Gym, **2nd Saturday evenings beginning this Fall/ Winter** and running through Mud Season. The Parsnips (musicians) appreciate having a regular venue with community involvement, and it is a good fundraiser for WHS.
- **WHS Village School building: Open by appointment**, for now.
- **WHS is participating in a Project, led by Doug Hull, to publish a book on the History of Worcester.**
- Continued development and utilization of our **WHS website**: visit us at www.worcestervthistoricalsociety.org
- **The Return of the Outhouse:** The 6-holer will be returned to its rightful place behind the Village School in time for our Annual meeting in 2008. Worcester resident Jerry Nelson has agreed to return and reconstruct it, using as much of the original structure as possible.
- **Archiving** of historical photographs, documents, and artifacts will continue. We need help in this process – please let us know if you are interested!
- **Restoration** work at the Village School. Window and chimney repairs targeted for 2008-2009.
- **Membership drive:** The WHS Board will continue to make an active effort to increase the membership of the Society. We count on members for financial support, but even more, to support the many projects and activities the WHS is undertaking in support of our mission, to communicate the historical and cultural legacy of Worcester, to maintain and foster our community's heritage. We welcome your support!

WHS Wish List

The following items are on our Wish List – please let us know if you would like to **contribute or donate!**

- Folding chairs (donations toward those that the WHS just purchased)
- Folding Tables (donations toward those that the WHS just purchased)
- LCD Projector
- National Register of Historic Places Plaque (it would be nice to get one for the Town Hall too)