

ANNUAL REPORT – September, 2007

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, 2007
Dell Waterhouse, Secretary	September, 2008
Elizabeth Schwartz	September, 2007
Cathy Hull	September, 2007
Audrey Richardson	September, 2008
Gordon Cole	September, 2008
Vivienne Adair	September, 2007

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

Membership Status

The WHS currently has a total of 65 members, made up of: 15 Individual memberships; 8 Family memberships; 41 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 has been revised 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, 2006 – August, 2007)

- **Renovation of the WHS building**

Our biggest priority over the past year has been the renovation of **the Worcester Village School** (also known as the White School).

The ultimate goal of the renovations to the building is to expand its role 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.

Significant Fundraisers:

- **Town Meeting Lunch-** WHS served the meal on Town Meeting Day as a fundraiser- with the very generous support of **Gretchen Saries** and **Greg Labarthe** of Bon Temps Gourmet Catering. They prepared- and *donated*- the entrees for a delicious lunch that was enjoyed by all! More meals were sold than in the past few years, no doubt due to the menu! Proceeds went toward Village School renovations.
- Cathy Hull came up with the concept of a **Valentine** fundraiser and carried it all the way through: from creating the artwork and design of the cards, printing them, providing all envelopes and labels, and even the postage to mail ~200. She

enclosed **Memory Cards** with the Valentines for the recipient to fill in their memories associated with the Worcester Village School. Her efforts paid off as WHS received many **donations** and **priceless memories** in return.

- **Love Light Tree** at Christmas. (discussed further below)
- **Community Contra Dances** at Doty School. (discussed further below)
- **Fall Ham & Baked Bean Dinner & The Vermont Fiddle Orchestra-** cosponsored by **The Worcester Methodist Church Outreach Program and The North Branch Grange**. These organizations kindly gave their portion of the proceeds to the WHS, and the VFO performed free of charge.
- **The 4th of July Chicken Barbecue**.

Request for Quotes & Repairs Completed:

- Michele Hill continues to lead the effort to have the **windows** and **chimney** repaired- we hope that the balance of the Grant from the Freeman Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont will cover most of the window work, but the chimney repairs, done by a Pres. Trust approved contractor, will be expensive. No bids were received, from six RFQ packages sent out this spring, for the Window repairs. The company that did the Window Restoration Workshop last fall will submit a bid for Spring 2008.
- By the end of 2006, **three major renovation projects** at the Village School had been **completed**: Installation of a **new standing seam roof** and **painting of the exterior** (funded by the **Grant from the Freeman Foundation and the Preservation Trust of Vermont**), and **updates to the wiring and electrical system** (**Cultural Facilities Grant** through the State of Vermont- \$1,400; equally matched by WHS)

Other Projects & Programs from September, 2006 – August, 2007

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: Repairing the Bell & Memories of Worcester Village School** (Sept. 21, 2006). The evening was kicked off by the first ringing of the repaired bell in its restored belfry. Roger Lawrence, the oldest person in attendance who went to the Village School (graduated 1938), had the honor of ringing the bell. A Times Argus reporter was on hand, and a photo appeared in the newspaper the next day. A Potluck supper was followed by a short meeting, and then the program. Jerry Nelson (who completed the repair project) talked about the research that he did on the bell, the process of casting bells in general, and how it was repaired. We really appreciated his enthusiasm, and also the excellent and timely job that he did- including absorbing such unforeseen expenses as having to rent a larger “lift” from Morrisville to re-install the bell in the belfry. Roger Lawrence and other people then informally shared their memories of the school.

- **Ham & Bean Dinner & Vermont Fiddle Orchestra Concert:** November 18, 2006. The WHS joined with the North Branch Grange and the Worcester Methodist Church Outreach program to host this event. This was well attended, and all proceeds went to the WHS. (The VFO performed free of charge, and our neighbor organizations refused their share.)
- **2007 Calendar- Worcester Sawmills** was published in November.
- **Love Light Tree- Lighting ceremony** Dec. 3, 2007. Audrey and Jim Richardson donated a large tree and organized this revival of a Worcester tradition. Many lights were bought in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones. About 50 people gathered as the names were read, the tree was lit, and carols were sung in front of the Village School. Hot chocolate and goodies were served in the first floor classroom, which had been transformed to an old-fashioned living room (with another tree from the Richardsons) complete with vintage toys and sugarplums suspended overhead! Newell Shonio then did a very special reading of “A Visit From St. Nicholas”(The Night before Christmas) in his Union suit! (Dot White was dressed as the wife.) A successful and meaningful fundraiser, which will continue!
- **Contra Dances (January and April):** Two Community Contra Dances were held in Doty Gym, reviving a history of dances in town. An enthusiastic crowd of ~ 65-75 people of all ages attended each dance. “The Parsnips”, a group of traditional musicians from Worcester and the surrounding area (two of whom are new WHS members), played these family dances and split the proceeds (from admission) with the WHS. The WHS also received donations from a refreshment table. The April dance became a benefit for the Russ Family of Worcester, who lost their home in a fire the weekend before- both the musicians and the WHS donated all proceeds to the family.
- **Town Meeting Lunch:** Members of the WHS hosted the lunch at Town Meeting in March, with the entrees generously prepared and donated by **Bon Temps Gourmet**, as a fundraiser for the Society.
- **WHS Spring Quarterly Program:** April 19, 2007. WHS founding member and past president, **Cliff Mullen**, gave an excellent presentation based on the research for his published article on the 1780 **Revolutionary War Battle of Ft. George** (NY). Cliff is a re-enactor in Col. Seth Warner’s Regiment (originally the Green Mountain Boys), which participated in the battle.
- **Ringing the bell** to celebrate **graduation of 6th graders**- a new tradition began on the last day of school, when 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!
- **Vermont History Expo:** June 23-24, 2007 the WHS presented “**Early 1900s Kitchen**” at the Vermont History Expo at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. Cathy and Doug Hull created the exhibit, which included an extensive collection of early kitchen gadgets, tools, and utensils. There were several hands-on activities, which kids loved. Cathy shared the exhibit with Doty students (at the Village School) the week before the Expo., then brought it back again for display on July 4th. Many thanks to Cathy and Doug!

- **4th of July Celebration & exhibits:** WHS members played an integral role in organizing and orchestrating Worcester's 4th of July Celebration- the Theme was "Step Back in Time to the 1950's and 60's". During the day, the Society served the traditional chicken barbecue (as a fund-raiser), organized other fund-raising activities, and presented exhibits ("Early 1900's Kitchen" from the Vermont History Expo., June Richardson's Elvis Memorabilia, and Dick Dodge's Vintage Toys). The day ended with a fabulous fireworks display, thanks to 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. This year's display was in memory of Steve. 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.
- The new **WHS website** (www.worcestervhistoricalsociety.org) went online in July. Huge thanks to Susan Premo for creating 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.
- **Archiving Project:** Cathy Hull has made significant progress in the extensive project of archiving our collection (mostly documents).

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 every other month, presented by WHS, during the coming year.
- **Oct. 13, 2007 at 7:00- Program by David Schutz, Vermont State Curator, on the 150th Anniversary of the Vermont Statehouse.**
- **2008 Calendar-** an interesting **collection of Worcester people and scenes (available now!)**
- **Contra Dances** at Doty Gym, **2nd Saturday evenings beginning Nov. 10** and running through Mud Season. The Parsnips (musicians) are excited to have a regular venue with community involvement, and it is a good fundraiser for WHS.
- **WHS Village School building: Open 2nd Saturdays from 10-Noon (May – Sept.), or by appointment**

- **WHS will participate** 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 2008. Worcester resident Jerry Nelson has agreed to return and reconstruct it, using as much of the original structure as possible. Much fanfare and fun will accompany it! Those interested in helping with the project can contact Doug Hull.
- **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.
- The **Vermont History Expo** in June 2008, at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds, will feature a WHS offering on The Civil War.
- **Publication** about The Civil War.
- **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

Folding Tables (preferably light-weight)

LCD Projector

Screen (for projection)

National Register of Historic Places Plaque (it would be nice to get one for the Town Hall too)

Electric fan