

BULLETIN



Number 127

Orleans County Historical Society, Inc. • Brownington, Vermont 05860

Summer 2015

A new Challenge Pledge is making some exciting projects come to life!!!



Digging a test pit at the original site of the Orleans County Grammar School.



Screening the dirt from the test pit looking for artifacts

are doubly significant. Contributions of \$25 will grow to become \$50; \$50 will grow to become \$100; \$250 will grow to become \$500, and so forth. We very much hope you will be able to take part.

Please make a gift to the Old Stone House Museum at a time when

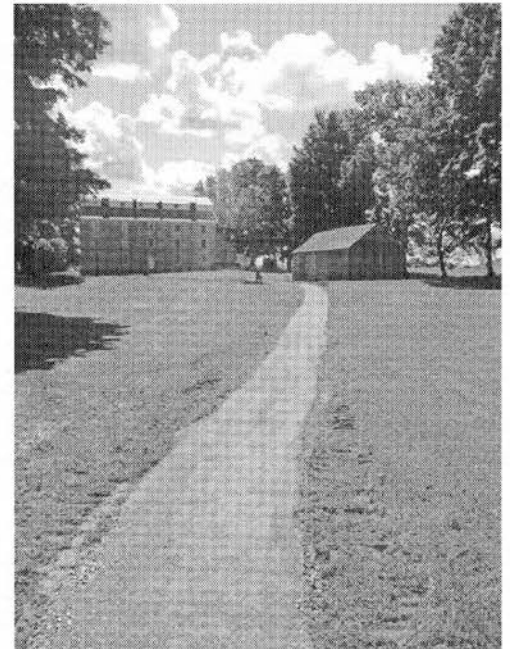
Summer began with a bustle of activity. In early June we conducted an archeological survey, funded in part by a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation, as part of our commitment to move the 1823 Grammar School back to its original location. Just after the Antique Engine Show, we began construction of pathways and ramps to improve handicapped access to historic buildings, with help from a Cultural Facilities Grant from the Vermont Arts Council. In early July we held a very successful Heritage Craft Week.

At the end of July we welcomed 60 children for Time Travelers Day Camp. Curatorial staff has begun create bilingual translations for our website, as well as for exhibit labels, so that we can be truly accessible to both French and English visitors by next year!

We are therefore thrilled to be able to share news that all these summer activities have inspired a **\$16,000 Challenge Pledge** in support of our **2015 Annual Fund**. Thanks to support from the Linton Family Foundation, *all* contributions made before September 30th will be applied to meet this 1:1 match, which means that *gifts made now*

donations will make a real difference. Your *tax deductible* contribution not only ensures that we continue to realize great exhibits and educational programs, but also supports our ability to begin the Grammar School Project next year.

We thank you so much for your consideration at this important time.



Packed earthen paths will provide unobtrusive handicapped access to the Old Stone House and Barn, and staymat walkways through the lawn give easy access to buildings.

See more pictures on page 3

Upcoming Events & Workshops

Old Stone House Day – Sunday, August 16, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Museum Open House, Demonstrations of Traditional Skills, Crafts, Farmers Market, Food, Music, Pie Auction. \$5 a carload. Parking on Prospect Hill and beside Twilight House.

Fall Foliage Races – September 13, Sunday morning

½ Marathon Run starts at 8 a.m., 12 Mile Bike, 5K Run and 5K Walk start at 9 a.m. Enjoy early fall foliage on mostly dirt roads. Pre-register on-line at www.oldstonehousemuseum.org (\$20 before Aug. 20 or \$25 after) or register at race.

Cheese & Apple Tasting – Sunday, September 27, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Taste locally produced cheese, apples, spirits, maple products, condiments, bread and more on the lawn of the Samuel Read Hall House at peak foliage. Apple Pie Contest, Heirloom Vegetable Exhibit, Apple Pressing, Apple Chomp Contest for Kids, Lunch. admission, free for under 9 or over 90, or anyone bringing an apple pie or heirloom vegetable.

Presentation: The Mind of Alexander Twilight – Sunday, September 27, 3 p.m.

After the Cheese and Apple Tasting at the Brownington Congregational Church, hear Larry Hundersmark, Pace University Religion Professor, talk about Twilight's life and times, and delve into his philosophy.

Candlelight Harvest Dinner – Saturday, October 17, 6 p.m.

Step back into the 19th century for an evening at the elegant, candlelit Samuel Read Hall House for sumptuous meal of local food prepared with historic recipes. Live music, hors d'oeuvres, local beer, wine and rhubarb punch, dinner courses served family style in the two front parlors with friends you haven't met. \$75 a plate benefits programs at the museum. Limited to 40 people, so reserve early by calling 754-2022 or register on-line at www.oldstonehousemuseum.org

Blacksmithing

Modern Blacksmithing, Dennis Gibson -Sat., Aug. 15, 9 am – 5 pm at Dennis's shop in West Glover

Bring a project that requires both traditional and modern techniques. Previous experience or beginner course required. Cost \$7 or \$65 members, plus \$10 materials.

Fundamentals of Blacksmithing, Courtney Mead –

Four half day classes will teach students the fundamentals of blacksmithing, as they make their own tools:

Taste of Blacksmithing Class Aug. 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10- 9 am–1pm.

A morning class for beginners, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Forge a simple hook or fire place or grill tool, as you learn basic blacksmith skills. 15 years old and up, or as young as 12 IF accompanied by an adult. Cost: \$40 for members and \$50 for non-members, materials included.

Follow that beginner course or previous introductory class with three half-day classes. Two sessions of fundamentals course will be offered, each costs \$50, or \$40 for members plus \$10 materials:

Tool Making - Sun. August 9, 9 am -1 pm, or Sat. Aug. 22, 9 am – 1 pm

Forge a round punch and slitting tool out of spring steel, and learn how to use them properly.

Fire Rake - Sat. Aug 22, 2 -6 pm or Sat. Sept. 5, 9 am - 1 pm

Make a fire rake with welded loop handle, and riveted sheet steel rake, using tools from previous class.

Forge a Pair of Tongs Sun. Aug 23, 9 am – 1 pm or Sat. Sept. 5, 2 – 6 pm

Forge a pair of flat jaw tongs with forge-welded reins (handles).

Basket Making with Carolyn Starr - Cost \$25 or \$20 for Members:

Hosier Market Basket – Wed., Aug 12, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Intermediate Level. Material Fee \$26

Karen's Picnic Basket – Sat., Aug 22, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Intermediate Level. Material Fee \$39

Other Classes:

Seed Saving Basics – Aug 26, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Pam Kennedy No Charge

Herbal Remedies – Wednesday, Sept 23, 6 to 8 p.m., Amy Palaia

Learn to make lip balm, hand salve and cream, and cold fighting syrups and tinctures. Cost \$20, or \$15 for members, plus \$7 material fee.

Rug Braiding – Sat. & Sun. Sept 19 & 20, and Sun., Sept 27, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day, Mary Ragano

By popular demand, a repeat of the Heritage Craft Week course, where students make a 2' X 3' oval rug. Cost \$75, or \$65 for Museum Members, plus \$17 supply fee. (Material not included, but wool will be available to buy.)

Archaeology



Archaeologist Andy Beupre uses a transit to position test pits during the dig on June 6 and 7 at the original site of the Orleans County Grammar School on Prospect Hill.

Antique Engine Show



Art Blair, right, and his wife Pat, middle, have been bringing their antique rope making tools and showing people how to make rope at the Antique Engine Shows, Collectors' Fairs and School Field Days for many years. They came to the Antique Engine Show on June 20 and delighted the crowd once again.

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Handicapped Ramps



John and Johnny Rodgers built and packed earthen ramps to replace the wooden handicapped ramps leading into the Old Stone House and the adjoining barn. They seeded and mulched the new ground, and the summer rain has turned it into a nice lawn.

Time Travelers Day Camp

On the first day of Time Travelers Day Camp at the end of July campers in the weaving class sketched flax to break down the fibers. Campers also practiced blacksmithing, archaeology, grain painting, woodworking and basket making. They investigated primary sources, to learn about the lives of people who lived in Brownington between 1850 and 1870 to help the museum understand what life was like during the period of the decline of the Orleans County Grammar School, the Civil War and move of the building from Prospect Hill to Brownington Village. Camp was funded this year by the Vermont Humanities Council and the Virginia Wharton Fund.



Donations to the Museum May 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015

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The Orleans County Grammar School comes home

The Society has embarked upon a great and challenging project—Moving the Orleans County Grammar School Home. On Town Meeting Day, Brownington voters unanimously agreed to give the building to the museum, which plans to move it back to the base of Prospect Hill and restore it, for future use for museum exhibits and events, and continued use by the town, church and grange.

The Orleans County Grammar School, the first secondary school in the county, was built along the Hinman Settler Road in Brownington at the base of Prospect Hill in 1823. It was a natural choice for location. Brownington sits in the middle of the county, and in 1791 Timothy Hinman began building the first road, from Greensboro to Derby, which passed through Brownington, and later became part of the stage coach route between Boston and Montreal. So, 25 years after the first settlers arrived, students could continue their educations beyond the local one-room schools at the county grammar school.

William Baxter, a lawyer who lived in Brownington, put up the money and arranged to build the school, with the agreement that church services would be held on the second floor, which they were until the Brownington Congregational Church was built in 1841. There is oddly no mention in the early town meeting records, meticulously transcribed by Joan Huguenin, of the building of the actual school, but there is specific detail about the leveling of the land around the school, and the construction of a wood shed measuring 14 X 18 feet, within which were to be built two “necessaries, with stone well placed in vaults.”

When the grass is short, you can see a rare flat spot in the downhill slope of Prospect Hill. The site is straight in from the road where it hits its high point just north of the Hall House driveway. There is a depression, lined up with the church as shown in the 1859 Wallings Map, which measures the same dimensions as the building we now know as the Brownington Grange Hall. In 1869 the building was moved a third of a mile down the road. The 1879 Beers Atlas shows the Grammar School just to the south of the Addison Store. The store’s old foundation is between the current Grange Hall and Florence Thompson’s house.

The old bell tower was taken down before the move. The

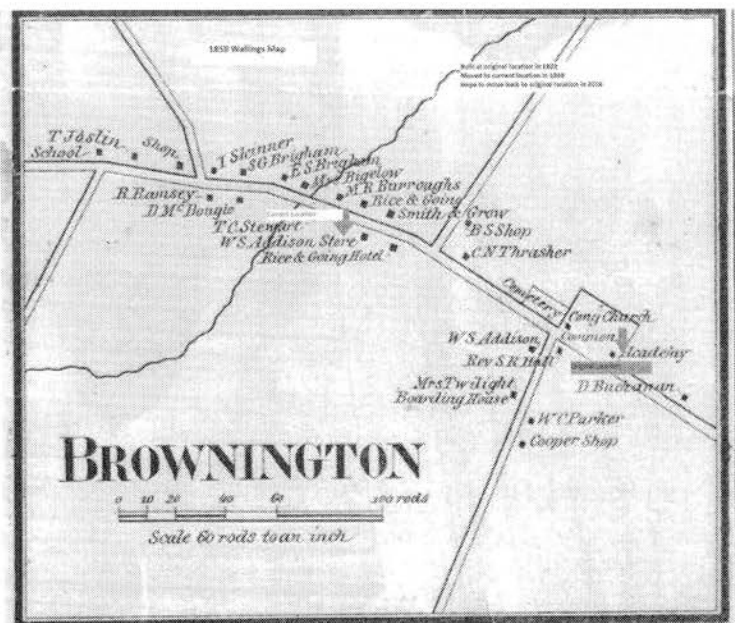
building was moved straight in on the opposite side of the road, so that the side that was facing the road is now in the back. The two-hole outhouse was then built on the back, and the long porch on the front.



Why did they move the building? Possibly it was because the center of activity had moved down towards the village. The old Grammar School account book leaves off at 1865, and resumes in 1870, so perhaps the school was closed down for a time.

The Orleans County Grammar School’s student population and tax revenue had declined with the opening of town academies in Craftsbury, Derby, Barton, and Glover. Alexander Twilight had a stroke in 1856

and died in 1857. The Old Stone Dormitory closed down, and Mercy Twilight started a boarding house and tavern there. The Civil War enlisted a large number of Brownington boys and men, many of whom did not come home, or returned wounded. The West was opening up for settlement, calling a depressed population towards new opportunity.



Old friends

The Orleans County Historical Society has lost a lot of old friends this year. At the risk of leaving out so many of the special people, whose lives have enriched their families and communities and given this area its special character, we must mention a few people who over the years have made a great difference in the Old Stone House Museum.

Reverend Herbert Perry died in November. He had volunteered at the Old Stone House Museum as a tour guide and researcher since he became acquainted with the neighborhood while serving as an interim pastor at the Brownington Congregational Church, where Alexander Twilight and Samuel Read Hall preached. Herb was a scholar of early American religious movements, and read all of Twilight's sermons, gaining an insight into the man who built the Old Stone House and led the school from 1829 until his death in 1857. Herb created an index of Twilight's Sermons by topic and by bible verse, which is included with the collection of sermons accessible on our website.

Paul Moffat, who died at the end of March, had served on the board of trustees for many years. He was an engineer for Texas Instruments from the early days of the company, and had a camp on Willoughby Lake for over 40 years. He built a small blacksmith shop behind his camp, and gave classes for Heritage Craft Week there, and also came to the museum to demonstrate in front of the Lawrence Barn for events. It was his vision, labor and funding that built the teaching blacksmith shop at the museum, which will forever be called the Moffat Forge.

Paul also got the grant and supervised the installation of the dry fire hydrant that draws water from the pond behind the Lawrence Barn, which has already saved one home in Brownington. If any of our buildings catch fire, it will provide quick access to unlimited water.

Paul's many years at Texas Instruments had earned him stock options that had appreciated. Rather than pay the federal government capital gains tax, he transferred stock to the museum, which sold it to help with the purchase of the Samuel Read Hall House.

Edith Herrick died in April. She and her family bought the Samuel Read hall House in the 1960's for a summer home. She continued to spend summers there until 2004, and the family sold the house to the museum in 2005. An avid historian and antique house lover, she restored the house the way she believed it was originally built in 1831. Our restoration in 2009 was mostly structural. We left the same paint colors and room designs that she had chosen after much research.

Of lasting impact, Edie led the effort to have the Brownington Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Most recently in June, we lost Charles Parker Barrows, who was involved with the society for most of his life, and served on the board of directors for many years. Charlie's ancestor Judge Isaac Parker of Coventry was the headmaster of the Orleans County Grammar School the year before Alexander Twilight arrived. Charlie donated many unique artifacts to the museum, including the zinc lined bathtub on the third floor, the deep pink antique brocade couch we use in the Hall House, and innumerable books and documents from his family archives and the Barrows Store in Barton.

On a personal note, Charlie gave my husband Dennis and me our first mortgage, when he was the manager of the Howard Bank in Barton, back when bankers judged people by their character, and not what some far away accountant determines from financial figures compared to national averages. He and his wife Lois came to our wedding and met our parents. He recommended to the board that they promote me from education coordinator to director in the fall of 2006, and he agreed to be president if I would be the director.

Since I moved to the area in 1974, the biggest change that I have seen is the loss of the old ones, who have made this such a special place. Somehow, the nature of this area breeds, nurtures, and attracts unique characters. Maybe it is the landscape, the climate, the economy or lack of it, but I think it is also the history, and the appreciation of those who have come before.

- Peggy Day Gibson

Third Annual Gala Benefit Auction raises \$10,000 for Museum



Travis Hall was the auctioneer for the Live Auction at the Gala on July 16. Come to Old Stone House Day on August 16 to hear him auction off donated pies under the band tent around 12:30 p.m. after the Annual Meeting. He's really good.



Our three summer interns assisted us at the auction, showing off the antique oak table desk donated by Tom and Christine Moseley. On the left is Sabeth Morris, our Americorp Volunteer tour guide. In the middle is her sister Alani Morris, who has been working in our gardens and orchard. On the right is Julia Keith, a French teacher from the Boston area who is translating our brochure and signage into French. They are all a pleasure to have around.

Old Stone House Day Sunday, August 16

This year Old Stone House Day will be held on Bennington Battle Day, August 16. On Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. it's our biggest event of the year, and has its roots in the first Orleans County Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Picnic in 1915.

This year we are returning the society's annual meeting to Old Stone House Day. From noon to 1 we will close down the museum and let our volunteers get their lunch and sit down with other museum members for the annual meeting, where we will go over the past year's activities and finances and elect new board members.

While we have everybody's attention, and before the band Friends and Drifters starts to play again, we will auction off delicious pies made by our baking friends. We welcome donations of pies, and invite pie lovers to put their money where their mouths are and bid big money for those pies, which will go toward museum programs.

From 1 to 3 p.m. the museum will open again for self-guided tours, hosted by a second set of volunteers, and the band will strike up the music again. All day there will be demonstrations of traditional skills, with spinners, rug hookers, rug braiders and quilters gathered beside the education building and blacksmiths working at the Moffat Forge. The costume box and old fashioned pastimes, including stilts and hoops, will be out for the children to play with. There will be a Farmers Market and Craft Vendors. Members of local town historical societies will have displays of their projects and collections.

In Brownington Village, on your way in or out, stop at the Brownington Grange Hall, formerly the Orleans County Grammar School, and take a look inside. The Orleans County Historical Society plans to move the 1823 building back to its original site at the base of Prospect Hill. The Brownington Congregational Church will be having a tag sale downstairs on Old Stone House Day.

Upstairs in the Brownington Grange Hall, visitors can view the painted curtain created in the early 1900's with a scene of Willoughby Lake and advertisements for local businesses. On the museum lawn, Chris Hadsel, who located and restored these beautiful painted curtains in town halls, theaters and granges all over northern New England will be selling and signing her lavishly illustrated book, "Suspended Worlds," which is fresh off the press.

As in past years, the Brownington Ladies Aid will be serving lunch on the main lawn of the museum, to raise money to maintain the historic church up the road, where both Alexander Twilight and Samuel Read Hall preached. There will be kettle coffee, heated in a huge cast iron kettle over an open fire like they served in the early days of the Annual Picnic, and fresh corn on the cob.

And there will be much more. Pick up a schedule of events as you walk out of the parking areas. Admission to Old Stone House Day is \$5 per carload, with parking at the base of Prospect Hill and also beside the Twilight House. The handicapped drop-off is just in front of the Old Stone House.

This year's theme is "Orleans County, a Moving Experience." We are collecting stories and photos of buildings all over the county that have been moved. Before there were power lines and permits, and when there were fewer trees, people used to move buildings a lot. Buildings were often moved in the winter, slid on runners over frozen roads, and in the warmer months they were rolled on logs, pulled by oxen or horses. In preparation for moving the Orleans County Grammar School back to Prospect Hill, we'd like to learn how and why people moved buildings all around the county. You can e-mail scans of photos to director@oldstonehousemuseum.org before Old Stone House Day, or bring your photos that day and we will make copies.

Wish List

Photos and stories about the 1869 move of the Orleans County Grammar School,!!!!

Photos and stories about moving buildings in other towns. Bring them to Old Stone House Day August 16 if you can, and we will exhibit them. Or just come tell us about the buildings you know of that were moved in your town.

Memories of events held in the Brownington Grange Hall over the years.

Croquet set, horseshoes, badminton & volleyball net and equipment for Hall House lawn recreation

Road worthy dump wagon

Red Sox and/or Yankee tickets for next year's Gala Auction

THE OLD STONE HOUSE MUSEUM BULLETIN

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