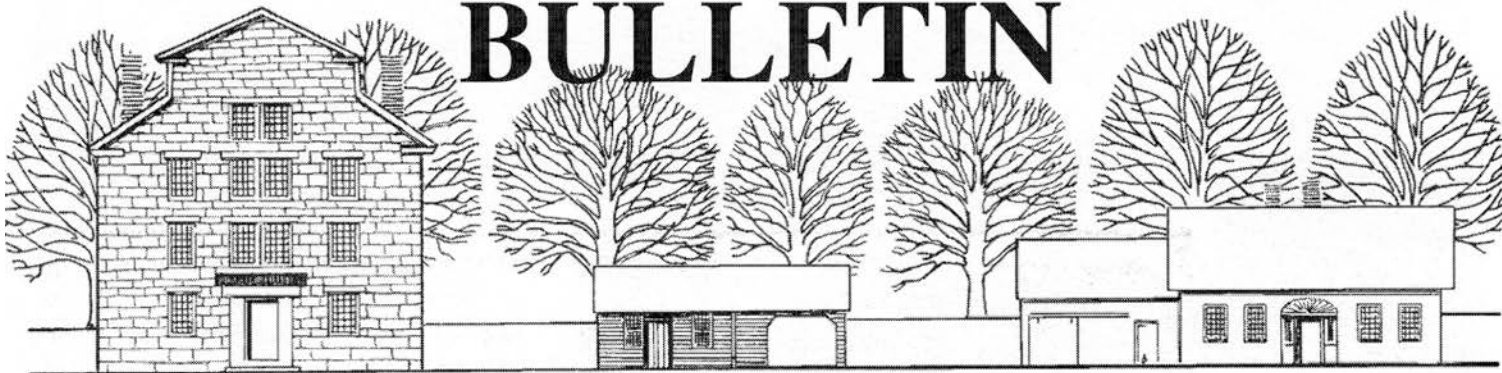


BULLETIN



Number 130 Orleans County Historical Society, Inc. • Brownington, Vermont 05860 Summer 2016

A gathering of oxen



All the way through, this has been a project with a lot of heart and a wonderful cast of characters. We are saving a historic building and giving it new life. We are restoring this neighborhood to the way it was in the time of Alexander Twilight and Samuel Read Hall, and are better able to tell the fascinating story of this place. Ever since the town of Brownington gave the building to the museum at their 2015 town meeting, we have been planning, raising money, and making it happen.

On Mothers' Day in 2015, when we first met Norman Messier, I asked if it was possible to use oxen to help move the building. He said, if you can get the oxen, I can use them. I went to the fairs, and soon realized that it wasn't the pulling oxen we wanted, but the working steers, with their 4H teamsters and their adult leaders. We were not sure how much the oxen could pull, uphill on the pavement. We wanted to have supplemental power that could move the building, but let the oxen help. As it turned out, the 106 ton building would have needed many more oxen, used to pulling heavy loads, to actually pull it up the hill. But hitching all the teams together and being a part of this historic reenactment gave the teamsters and the over 2,500 spectators a memory of a lifetime.

Organizing the project has been a lot of fun, and a lot of paperwork. It's been a balancing act between preserving the historic building, and meeting safety and access code requirements, and a puzzle of funding sources, each with its own requirements.

Working with the 4-H groups and local teamsters, and seeing all those beautiful oxen was a real treat. Local farmers, businesses and volunteers helped us house and feed 46 oxen plus the teamsters and their families for two days. The architect, engineer, movers, linemen and contractors have all been inspired by this project and donated extra time and energy, as has our very active board of directors.

We are not done yet. The building is now on the basement, and the septic and water-lines have been laid. We will finish the plumbing & heating system and restore the windows before spring. We still have to raise \$150,000 to build the bell tower, which will provide the second exit on all floors, rebuild the porch with handicapped ramp, and build the chimney. If you can, please send your donation in the enclosed envelope.

- Peggy Day Gibson

helped to bring the Grammar School home



Upcoming Events

Cider Pressing – every Saturday afternoon September 10 – October 15. Bring your own apples and containers, and press cider on the museum press. Three gallon limit if there are others waiting. Share a few cups with our other visitors. \$2/gallon donation requested.

Herbal Remedies – Wednesday, September 21, 6-8 p.m. *Amy Palaia* will teach you how to prepare herbal remedies that will help get you through the winter. Learn to make lip balm, hand salve and cream, to soothe that dry winter skin, and fight colds with elderberry syrup and Echinacea tincture. Cost is \$20, or \$15 for members, plus a \$7 material fee.

Cheese & Apple Tasting – Sunday, September 25, 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. \$8 admission, free for under 9 or over 90, or anyone bringing an apple pie with recipe or an heirloom vegetable with history.

Fundamentals of Blacksmithing – Saturdays, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, . 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. *Courtney Mead* will teach beginners through intermediates basic skills at the forge. Cost \$50, or \$40 for members. The monthly **Open Forge is from 1-5 p.m.**, where new students and others who have had at least an introductory course can practice at the forge, with guidance from an instructor. \$10 material fee.

Vinegar Grain Painted Box Class – Saturday, Oct. 8, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. *Mártha Kinney* will teach early American grain painting, creating different graining effects, to decorate a nicely made box with a lid. Cost \$45, or \$40 for members, plus material fee of \$10 per box (2 possible).

Museum Closes for the Season – Oct. 15. Saturday, October 15, is the final day of the season. Until then, we are open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. The museum will reopen on May 15, 2017.

Candlelight Harvest Dinner – Saturday, October 25, 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

Pie Crust for Beginners – Saturday, November 19, 9 a.m. to noon. *Bob Hunt*, museum Education Coordinator and award winning pie maker, will pass on the secrets of making a great crust, just in time for Thanksgiving. In the Hall House kitchen, learn to make a Vermont Farmhouse lard and butter pie crust and share traditional recipes for apple, pumpkin and lemon meringue pie. Bring home a ready-to-bake award winning apple pie! Cost \$20, or \$15 for members.

Meeting with Local Historical Societies - Thursday, October 27, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Members of town historical societies are invited to join us at the Hall House for a pot luck luncheon and discussion on how we can share information and collaborate on research, training and projects. Call 754-2022 for more information.

Wish List:

Pictures and stories of happenings in the Brownington Grange Hall.

Call us and set up an oral history interview.

Local diaries & letters from November and December of 1869, which might include information on the first move of the Grammar School down the road 1/3 mile to Brownington Village.

Pictures and memorabilia from the Orleans County Fair, which could be included in an exhibit to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the fair next summer.

The Orleans County Historical Society, Inc.
109 Old Stone House Road, Brownington, VT 05860
802-754-2022 information@oldstonehousemuseum.org
website: www.oldstonehousemuseum.org

THE OLD STONE HOUSE MUSEUM BULLETIN

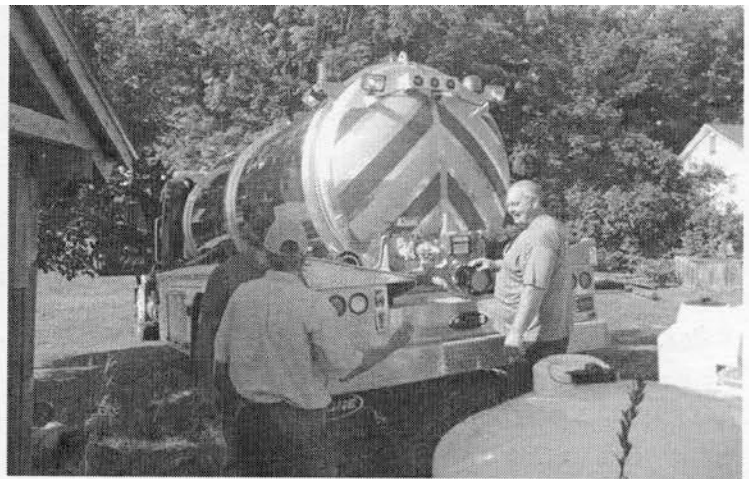
Courtney Mead, President

Peggy Day Gibson, Director
Bob Hunt, Education Coordinator
Katherine French, Curator
Jenny Lauer, Collections Manager
Leslie Rowell, Archivist
Amy Palaia, Bookkeeper
Dayna Drake, Administrative Assistant

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We had an all-star cast of characters on the project, including left to right, architect Rob Brown, J.P. Sicard Estimator George Carpenter, OCHS Building and Grounds Committee Chairman Jane Greenwood, engineer Janet Kane, and J.P. Sicard Project Manager Brad Drake.



E.J. Rowell from the Orleans Fire Department filled up the water tanks for the oxen watering and cleaning stations. Tim McCoy, on the left brought hay for the oxen, and helped out. On a cold day in February, Tim had walked on the Old Coventry Road with Jane and Peggy, which was mentioned a lot in land records as a property boundary in the old deeds, and then showed them where he bulldozed the remnants of the original foundation into edge of the woods decades earlier to smooth out the field for Carroll Lawes' haying equipment.



Norm Messier stands beside the Grammar School, mounted on three wheeled carriages, ready for the move. Norm's son Jason and a small experienced crew packed the building up in June, and removed the granite foundation stones from underneath. Messier's Moving Company delivered them to a granite shed in Barre, where they were cut into 3 inch slabs to face the new concrete foundation. Norm's wife Carla sat in front of the building and steered it up the road behind the oxen during the move on August 8. Self powered dollies underneath, donated by Brownie Company Moving, provided power to help the oxen bring the 106 ton building uphill to its new and former home.



The footing was poured, including the addition for the bell tower which will be on the road gable end, and contains stairs from the basement to the second floor, which will meet fire and safety codes for a second exit. We know the bell tower was there from journal entries by former students. It was open, because ringing the bell for funerals was a cold job. And also, some students brought a sheep up to the top, and then lowered it out on a rope.



Jane Greenwood and Dennis Gibson worked during the two weeks prior to the Gathering of Oxen to set up accommodations for the 46 head of cattle that spent two days at the museum. Here they are shown building the "Steer Inn", with the help of board member Roger Poirier. They built a 150 foot long tie-up rail out of cedar posts and hemlock rails, covered by five 30 ft. tents. Also, Bruce Gonyaw loaned enough steel fencing for a 150 ft. X 70 ft. corral. Evan Perron and Ted Young loaned us sap tanks for water for the oxen to drink and a washing station.



Among the many visitors on Sunday who got up close to the gentle, freshly washed oxen were Andrea Cushman, Dana Cheney with his son Quinton on his shoulders, and Steven Freehart with Dana's daughter Abryanna on his shoulders petting an ox. Vivian, Dana's wife and the children's mother is just out of the photo. More than one child has been heard to say since, "I want to train oxen."

Orleans County Historical Society, Inc.
Old Stone House Museum
109 Old Stone House Road
Brownington, VT 05860

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Some of the many other summer events



New Education Coordinator Bob Hunt organized Time Travelers Day Camp the last week of July, focusing on the Rise of the Brownington Grange. The Grange has occupied the second floor of the Orleans County Grammar School since shortly after it was moved down to Brownington Village in 1869, and will continue to use the building now that it is back on Prospect Hill. Campers tried their hands at traditional crafts of blacksmithing, vinegar grain painting, hearth and home skills, treadles and spools, entertainment and woodworking. In the picture, Bob and the campers enjoy the performance of Justin Lander and Rose Freidman of Modern Times Theatre.



Dexter Bennett showed off his "Little Wonder Engine" at the Antique Engine Show on June 18. Members of the Vermont Antique Gas & Steam Engine Association and Cars of Yesteryear exhibited their well maintained examples of human ingenuity. Long-time organizer, Bob Williams, who passed away in March, would have been glad to know that his old friends made sure that the show went on, and will be back again next year, as always, on Fathers Day weekend.



The museum lost another dear old friend last week. Chet Carpenter was a long time volunteer, collector, local historian. A library of knowledge has gone with him. He is pictured here enjoying the Barn Raising in 2012 with his daughter Kathy.

*Follow this link for more photos of the
Grammar School Project and Oxen Move.
[https://www.oldstonehousemuseumn.org/
grammar-school-oxen-move](https://www.oldstonehousemuseumn.org/grammar-school-oxen-move)*