

THE WEATHERSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY *News Letter*

WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT : SPRING 2022 : NUMBER 106

Historic Preservation Grant Received! Matching Grant offered! *by Ellen Clattenburg*

The Vermont Division of Historic Preservation (VDHP) awarded a grant of \$20,000 to the Weathersfield Historical Society to fix the drainage problems affecting the cellar of the Dan Foster House and to replace the floor system under the Common Room without damaging the original floor, trim and plaster in the house above it. This is a tricky job that will result in long-term preservation of this, the oldest section of the "Goldsmith Place."

While not a glamorous project, the work is critical in that the floor of the Dan Foster House is imperiled by the rotten supporting beams below.

The VDHP grant, however, will only cover part of our estimated \$50,000 in expenses. The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation of Etna, New Hampshire, has generously awarded us \$5,000 toward the cost of these repairs and restoration. An anonymous donor has given us another \$1,000 toward this project.

And now, with \$24,000 to go, John Woodward of Santa Barbara, California, a Goldsmith descendant, has offered to match any donations from members and friends toward this major project. Thank you so much, John! And thank you members and friends for your donations!



The yellow arrow indicates rain sheeting off Dan Foster's roof. It ends up in the cellar where decades of moisture have wrought havoc with the timbers.

The orange arrow indicates where drainage will be installed and move water to the west, then in a pipe under the ell (under the double doors and window with black shutters) and out to daylight on the other side of the ell.

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Please send your donations to
Rika Henderson, Treasurer, at our PO Box:

Weathersfield Historical Society
P.O. Box 126
Perkinsville, VT 05151

If you've forgotten the history of this building, here's a reminder:

In 1785 Weathersfield raised 60 pounds from taxes, and the townspeople built a home for their first settled minister. The call went out to Rev. Dan Foster of Connecticut who became Weathersfield's first settled minister in 1787. He continued in this role for the next 12 years.

Horace Cook owned the house until 1833, adding the Federal "I" style house on the east side, so Dan Foster's house now became the ell. Mr. Cook operated a tavern in the house and, according to the History of Windsor County (1891), he also operated a blacksmith shop. Shortly after James Walker Goldsmith arrived from Boston in 1830 with his partner Jonas Davis, another blacksmith, he set up shop in a corner of one of Mr. Cook's barns. He purchased the Horace Cook property three years later and built a separate blacksmith shop in 1842 (or 1846).

James Walker Goldsmith's son, James Henry Goldsmith (b. 1833), served as a musician during the Civil War and returned to Weathersfield in 1865. He built a house for his family nearby. When his father died in 1888, he moved into the family home now occupied only by his widowed mother. After James Henry Goldsmith's death in March of 1913, the house gradually fell into disrepair until it was rescued in 1948 by the Rev. Raymond Beardslee. Mr. Beardslee, a summer resident of Weathersfield who lived at the old Cady home at the top of Cady Hill Rd, dedicated himself to restoring the old Goldsmith place until his untimely death in 1950. Soon after this, the Weathersfield Historical Society was formed to take over the property.

Mr. John Woodward, who has so generously offered to match gifts made to the current restoration project, is the great, great, great grandson of the first Goldsmith in Weathersfield, James Walker, and has been a beneficent donor to the WHS over the years. ∞

James Henry Goldsmith and family 1903



March 2020–June 2021: The Crazy Pandemic Years *by Melissa Snyder*

These past two years since the pandemic began have been rough on everyone. The world has turned upside down and inside out and no one has been left untouched by the events that have transpired since March 2020. Our family has not escaped unscathed, and I'd like to share some of the ways these historic times have affected our little family right here in Weathersfield and beyond.

March 2020 found me helping take care of my mother in hospice at the senior living community where she'd been living for five years, while my daughter Virginia, a Windsor High School senior, was looking forward to proms and graduation parties. She had been accepted at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, and was Salutatorian of her class.

Suddenly everything turned upside down – Mom's facility went into lockdown and to be with her in hospice, I had to get a special "essential caregiver" badge. Virginia's high school went to remote learning. The whole senior class was devastated to learn that their senior activities were canceled. My husband's job went remote as well, and the store my son Ian worked for closed its doors permanently.

My mother died of cancer in April, and like so many other grieving families, we were not able to have a proper funeral for her.

In May, Virginia, who'd been civically active throughout high school, helped organize a silent vigil for George Floyd. This turned out to be one of the only public events she attended in her graduation season.

June is graduation month and Virginia graduated amidst the lockdown, with no prom, no "Project Grad" party, no group graduation photo, and no alumni parade the next day, just virtual zoom meetings and pre-recorded speeches. For the graduation ceremony itself, one by one each capped and gowned student stepped out of their car and crossed to an outdoor stage to receive a diploma from the Principal and the Superintendent. A few photos and that was it.

Just two days after graduation, my mother's sister lost her husband, and we drove south for his funeral, taking Mom and Dad's urns into the church for a blessing. Mom's father had founded the church and this was to be the only funeral service my mother would get. Our mourning was set against the background not only of Covid but also the ongoing issues of race: Windsor High School's principal made controversial remarks about Black Lives Matter, and we also visited relatives in Richmond, Virginia, where statues of Confederates were getting vandalized or torn down.

Summer passed in relative harmony, but Covid numbers continued to rise nationwide. Ian was set to pursue his

courses at Valencia College, a film school in Florida. Valencia went online-only for the school year and courses started later in the fall and were condensed to finish by the December break. Ian chose to stay home and pursue his classes here and had a great fall semester.

Georgetown University made a last minute decision to go completely virtual. Virginia knew how difficult online learning was at our house because of the slow internet speed. She moved heaven and earth to find a way to be in DC, whether or not the campus was open. After searching online student group chats, she found four other girls who were in the same boat, and they worked together to find housing. Against all odds, they found a beautiful 3-story, fully furnished, corporate townhouse on Capitol Hill, at a rate that wasn't much higher than dorm rent would have been. Covid had decimated the corporate housing market in the city and the rents were much lower than normal.

In September, the whole family went down to help Virginia move in and meet the other parents. This was before vaccines, and we were all careful to keep our masks on which made moving boxes and furniture difficult in DC heat and humidity! We all went to dinner together in one of the few open restaurants, which had sidewalk tables because inside dining wasn't allowed.

I stayed a while longer to visit other relatives, and during that time Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away. On my way back to Weathersfield, I stopped in DC to drop supplies off to Virginia. We went to the Supreme Court to view RBG lying in repose. Virginia and I were talking about Ginsburg's legacy when a man standing next to us introduced himself and told us that the young woman standing by the casket as an honorary pallbearer was his daughter, who had been her law clerk. He told a story about meeting RBG who told him about being stationed in Oklahoma at Ft. Sill with her husband. Ginsburg was hired as a social security claims administrator, but when they found out she was pregnant, they lowered her pay grade to secretary while still requiring her to do the work of the higher level position. She was expected her to quit when she had the baby.



On December 14, the day Biden was named winner of the election, Virginia texted me a photo of her with thousands of other (masked) citizens celebrating in the streets. I was worried sick that even with masks she would catch Covid, but once again she was lucky. Despite other obstacles including getting robbed at gunpoint, Virginia finished her first semester at Georgetown, coming home for Christmas after finals.

January 6, 2021, in preparation for Virginia's move to a different house in DC, I took my first Covid test while the Capitol riot was breaking. Listening to Peter Welch describing the rioters trying to break into the chamber he was still in and watching events unfold felt like watching the Twin Towers fall on 9/11.

Knowing that DC was going to be heavily protected during the upcoming inauguration, I had booked an Airbnb weeks before, but a few days before our departure, Airbnb canceled all reservations in the city because of potential violence. Our host let us book privately when he learned that we were coming in preparation for the second semester at G.U., not for the inauguration. A week after the Capitol riot, we headed to DC. I told Virginia – to her chagrin – that I wasn't leaving town until after Inauguration Day to be sure she was safe.

My Airbnb was right on Pennsylvania Avenue, just six blocks from the White House, on the border of the completely locked-down, armed-guarded area. Parking is usually an expensive nightmare in DC, but ironically, the police had issued a moratorium on parking tickets during Covid, and I was able to park for free overnight right in front of my building!

DC was already on partial lockdown with the National Guard and riot police everywhere. While there were hardly any places open to eat and no one on the streets, it was still possible to get around. Virginia's new house was unfurnished, so we had to scramble to buy furniture and other home items, frantically searching for used furniture on the Facebook marketplace before roads closed. As the inauguration approached, there were plenty of small groups of loud protesters, but we saw no violence. The night of January 19 was eerily quiet.

On Inauguration Day, the streets were deserted. While I watched live coverage on local news, I looked out my window to see the helicopter fly President and Mrs. Trump to Andrews Air Force Base. After the swearing-in ceremony, I watched the Presidential caravan travel through Washington Circle on the way to the White House from that same window. A central Airbnb for sure!

That afternoon, after everything was over and things seemed safe, I ventured outside, driving down to the National Mall. Again, eerie silence, and no one on the streets. The Mall was heavily barricaded and armed National Guardsmen were stationed on every corner. I walked down

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Pandemic Years (from page 3)

to the Lincoln Memorial and saw the crew setting up for the evening's TV Inauguration gala. The next day, Washington, DC was already coming back to life – the barricades were coming down, streets were opening again, the National Guard was leaving. We drove to the National Mall and watched the Field of Flags being dismantled.

The following week, after I had already come home, Virginia and her entire friend group came down with Covid, and they were all very sick. Stuck in quarantine in their house for three weeks, friends had to leave food for them outside their door. Virginia couldn't ride public transportation for another week after her first negative test, walking everywhere. This was especially hard because she had been so sick. It took weeks to regain full lung function and be able to walk without getting winded. She got her vaccination as soon as she was eligible.

Vaccinated, we picked up Virginia in mid-May, and headed south to visit my husband's elderly parents in North Carolina and to finally have a graveside service for both Mom and Dad in Roanoke, Virginia. This was followed by the first reunion my family has had since 1968.

By August, the pandemic seemed to be in the rear view mirror, and the Georgetown campus reopened. They required all students and visitors to be vaccinated, all students had to pass a rapid Covid test upon arrival before moving in, and masks were mandatory, even in that DC heat and humidity.

These past two years have been nothing less than surreal, and living through so many historical and cultural events in the midst of the worst pandemic since the 1918 flu boggles my mind. The loss of so many loved ones has affected us all, and I pray we all have better days in the light of the New Year to come. ☺



Snyder Family Reunion, 2021

Willis Wood discovered the following bird contest in Augustus Aldrich's papers. He transcribed it for us – including the misspellings – and he has included one of the three pages of the contests showing birds listed alphabetically, the date contestants spotted the birds and points accrued for that sighting. Becky Tucker provided the information on the judges and contestants.

Weathersfield Bird Contest – March 13 through June 12th, 1915

Rules of Contest: March 13 to June 12, 1915, inclusive.

- ♦ The first day a bird is seen by a contestant, it counts 3 points for each child seeing it, if seen at a later date by another child, one point.
- ♦ **Committee in charge:** Thelma Putnam, Roxie Page, Gladys Merrill, Ralph Perkins, Augustus Aldrich
- ♦ **First Prize:** *American Birds* by W.L. Finley (\$1.50)
- ♦ **Second Prize:** *Bird Guide, Water Birds* by C.A. Ree (\$1.30)
- ♦ **Third Prize:** *Land Birds* by C.A. Reed (\$.80)

Contestants: Helena Putnam, Louise Aherns, Orman Stoughton, Rachel Merrill, Jessie Baker, Nicholas Aherns, Madeline Pierce, Mary Perry, Hazel Spaulding, Herman Aherns, Irene Putnam, Frankie Aldrich

Winners: 1st, Helena Putnam. 2nd, Louise Aherns. 3rd, Orman Stoughton.

Last place: Irene Putnam, Frankie Aldrich

Bird List:

March 13: Chickadee, Blue Jay, Crow
14th: Blue Bird, Goldfinch
15th: Snow Bunting
16th: Robin, Downey Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker
18th: White breasted Nuthatch
24th: Pine Grosbeak
28th: Black and White Wabler, Cedar Waxwing
April 1st: Song Sparrow
2nd: Red Winged Blackbird
4th: Partridge
8th: Flicker
9th: Rusty Blackbird
10th: Slate-colored Junco, Phoebe
11th: Crested Flycatcher, Ruby Crowned Kinglet
15th: Meadow Lark
17th: Chipping Sparrow
19th: Hermit Thrush
20th: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
21st: Bronze Grackle, Belted Kingfisher, English Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Cliff Swallow
22nd: Catbird

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	Helena Putnam	Louise Ahrens	Orman Stoughton	Prachet Merrill	Jean Bickel	Nicholas Ahrens	Madeline Pierce	Mary Perry	Karel Spaulding	Herman Ahrens	Gene Putnam	Frankie Albrecht
Red-winged Blackbird	4-2 ³	4-2 ³	4-19	4-10			4-2 ³		5-15			
" Rusty	5-21				4-9 ³	4-20		4-11				
Bluebird	3-20	3-23	4-3		3-24 ³	3-14 ³	3-20	4-4			3-26	
Bobolink	5-9	5-14			5-7 ³	5-12 ³						
Brewster's Indigo				6-2		5-9 ³						
" Snow									3-15 ³			
Cardinal			6-1 ³									
Catbird	5-21	5-13	4-22 ³	5-10	5-5	5-12		5-14			5-20	
Chewink	5-2 ³											
Chickadee	3-20	3-14	3-31		3-13 ³	3-25 ³	3-11	4-26	3-13 ³	3-18	3-22	4-8
Crow	3-19	3-14	4-3		3-23	3-14	3-14	4-19	3-13 ³	3-14	3-26	3-15 ³
Black-billed Cuckoo		5-29				5-20 ³						
" Yellow-billed						6-11 ³						
Eagle, Bald	5-2 ³											
Finch, Purple	5-2 ³											
Flicker			4-22	4-24	4-8 ³	5-1						
Gray-throated				6-2 ³								
" Crested	4-11 ³											
" Least	5-9	5-14			5-2 ³	5-20						
" Yellow-bellied		6-2 ³										
Goldfinch	4-3	3-14 ³	4-25		4-3		4-23			3-14 ³		
Jack-Bird				4-21 ³	5-11							
Robin				6-2 ³								
" Pine					3-24 ³							
House Sparrow	5-1 ³											
Hummingbird	5-22	5-14 ³	5-22	5-26		5-15		5-16				
Jay, Blue	3-22	3-17	4-5		3-23	3-14	3-16	4-6	3-14	3-13 ³		
" White	4-14	4-10 ³	4-10 ³	4-15	4-11		4-11	4-20				4-22
Kingbird	5-15	5-21	5-18 ³	6-3			5-22	5-16	5-15			
Kingfisher	4-21 ³		4-29	5-1	6-12							
Kinglet		5-16 ³										
" Ruby-crowned	4-27	5-7										4-11 ³
Loon, Hairy			4-15 ³			5-31						
34	28	24	17	26	22	10	9	12	8	4	6	

Bird Count (from page 5)

23rd: Vesper Sparrow
25th: White-crowned Sparrow, Brown Thrasher
27th: White-throated Sparrow
28th: Nashville Warbler
29th: Spotted Sandpiper, Barn Swallow
May 1st: Sparrow Hawk
2nd: Cherwink, Bald Eagle, Least Flycatcher
4th: Myrtle Wabler
6th: Redstart
7th: Bobolink
9th: Indigo Bunting, Baltimore Oriole, Chimney Swift, Maryland Yellow-throat
10th: Tree Swallow
11th: Kingbird
14th: Ruby-throated Hummingbird
15th: Chestnut-sided Wabler
16th: Golden-crowned Kinglet
17th: Whip-poor-will
20th: Black-billed Cuckoo
23rd: Purple Finch, Yellow Wabler
27th: Wood Pewee, Scarlet Tanager
30th: White-eyed Vireo
June 1st: Cardinal, Black-throated Blue Wabler
2nd: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Alda (Sp?) Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
8th: Blackpoll Wabler
9th: Red-eyed Vireo
11th: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-throated Vireo

71 birds listed in all

Committee in charge: *Thelma Putnam* (1894–1967) was 25. She married David Hoisington in 1929. They farmed at the Hoisington place, Thelma's family farm off Perkins Hill Road where Beth Hunton and Brian Bosenberg live today. The Hoisington daughters were Sylvia, Nancy, and Elaine; *Roxie Page* (1891–1938) was 24. She was the daughter of William and Hattie (Warren) Page who lived at the former Monacelli place on Center Road. She married Paul Hood in September 1915; *Gladys Celia Merrill* (1894–1991) was 25. She married Burnham Bibens in 1916 and was mother of Eric, George, Merrill, Rachel and Bettie Bibens. She was daughter of William and Mary Eva (Herrick) Merrill. In the 1920 Census, William Merrill was a veterinary surgeon and they lived in Lower Perkinsville; *Ralph Perkins* (1886–1954) was 29. He farmed on Perkins Hill Road with his sister Winnie Perkins; *Augustus Aldrich* (1888–1974) was 27. He lived in the Aldrich homestead now occupied by Willis and Tina Wood.

Contestants: *Helena Putnam* (1900–1985) was 15 and the winner. She was sister to Thelma, and was an artist and

teacher. Thelma and Helena were daughters of Frederick and Emma (Allen) Putnam. The *Ahrens* siblings were *Louise* (1901–1997) 14, *Nicholas* (1905–1972) 10, and *Her-man* (1907–1973) 8. Their parents Louis and Ellen (Wells) Ahrens sold their home on Center Road in 1920 to Beard-slee (later Sali and Eric Taylor). *Irene Putnam* (1905–1996) was 10. She grew up in the Edith and Armstrong Hunter home on Center Road with her parents Leon and Edith (Roberts) Putnam. She married Perley Hoyt, later Ed Williams, and was Weathersfield's Town Clerk and a past president of the WHS. Irene Putnam was not related to Thelma and Helena Putnam. *Frankie Aldrich* (1907–1988) would have been 7. He was the son of Charles Franklin Aldrich and his second wife, the widow Sarah Whitaker Piper, who moved from her farm on Piper Road. Frank was half brother to Augustus Aldrich and lived at the Aldrich place on Center Road. He was the great-grandfather of Marina Garland. *Orman Russell Stoughton* (1900–1926) was 15. He was the son of George and Lena (Russell) Stoughton, and Joe Stoughton's older brother. He never married, and died young. They may have lived in Perkinsville Lower Village, or on the Stoughton homestead. *Rachel E. Merrill* (1902–1974) was Gladys's younger sister. She was 13. Rachel married Charles Lamb in 1925 at Langdon NH. *Jessie Pearl Baker* (1902–1931) was 13. She lived with her grandmother Ellen (Dean) Baker Page and Ellen's second husband Frank Page who lived near the Goldsmiths on Center Road. Jessie attended Springfield High School then went to a business college. Employed as secretary to a Mr. Locke at the Holstein-Freisian Association in Brattleboro VT, Jessie had a sad end. She and four friends were out for a drive and hit a tree. The others recovered, but Jessie died four days later, aged 28. *Madeline Adella Pierce* (1902–1969) was 13. She was the daughter of William and Emma (Phelps) Pierce. They lived on the south corner of Perkins Hill and Center Road on the property earlier attributed to Seth "Soldier" Brown. (Now only the cellar hole remains.) Madeline married James Edward Digby in 1923 and farmed in Springfield. *Mary Perry* (ca. 1896–?) was 19. In 1920 she was a servant in the home of Webster Reed 79, and Carrie B. Reed 55. Mr. Reed operated several farms in Weathersfield according to the Census. From the neighbors' names in 1920 (Jarvis & Stoodley), they likely lived along today's Route 131 toward Ascutney. She may have married William Fenton in 1923 at Windsor and moved to Boston MA. *Hazel Annabelle Spaulding* (1900–1978) 15, was the daughter of Loren and Florence (Atherton) Spaulding. The Spauldings purchased the Cook's Pond place (later owned by Tiny Yewell and now Bob Dunham) in 1899 for \$500 for 90 acres, and were there through the early 1920s according to Edith Hunter's notes. ♡

The Magic Behind the Newsletter

by Ellen Clattenburg

In March 1987, just a year after the final issue of the *Weathersfield Weekly*, Edith Hunter initiated the WHS Newsletter with the distinctive masthead drawn by her son Charles Hunter at the top of every issue. Edith wrote most of the articles for the next 54 issues. Then as now, we publish three times a year – a spring issue in March, a summer issue in July (or sometimes August), and a late fall issue in November.

March 2022 marks the 35th year of publication, and for the past 10 years, Sally Harris has volunteered her time – and used her magic – to make this newsletter the highlight of our outreach. For the past 32 years, she's helped with graphic design and production of all our publications.

I sat with Sally on a day of rapidly falling temperatures to learn a bit about her path to this point. She sat behind her desktop Mac next to a big picture window overlooking an ice covered pond, a brook, a field, woods, and, towering above the trees, Mt. Ascutney. Indeed, it is this view that convinced Sally and Chris to buy the house in 1988. The Jaquiths were still building it but had recently decided not to live there so put it on the market. According to Sally, one look out the back window and they knew this was the home that would end their two-year house hunt. When Sally and Chris drove up Weathersfield Center Road and saw a sign "Hunter Press" with a large paper truck in the driveway, it confirmed they had chosen the right town. Soon after, Edith and Armstrong Hunter had them for dinner and before they knew it, Army was suggesting they take over the *Windsor Chronicle*. They did not, but they soon assumed many roles in the Weathersfield Historical Society (as well as actively supporting the Proctor Library). Sally and Chris started by designing and arranging the WHS publication, *The Life and Times of William Jarvis*. Soon Sally created signage for the Frippery, then became a WHS director, a chair of the Frippery, co-President and then Vice President. Over the years, Sally planned and produced many of our publications from historic postcards to a cookbook collection, and from Winnie Perkins' memories to *We Remember*. She is currently a one-woman publications committee. (Chris, like Sally, has filled many roles including director and publications committee member.) Sally remembered her first "grape colored" iMac – 1998 or 1999 – and the startling transition it made to the publishing world. She now had myriad fonts and layout options, all there in that one desktop computer.

But let's back up a bit. Sally attended Connecticut College where she majored in Classics. Yes, she's a Greek and Latin scholar! Her abiding interest was illustration and graphic design and so after a stint of copywriting for a fashion buyer in New York, she was accepted at the Yale School



photo: Ellen Clattenburg

of Art and Architecture where she earned first her Bachelor of Fine Arts and then her Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design. A mentor at Conn. College told her she would have "a portable profession for life." This program covered everything Sally would need in the years ahead – typography, letterpress, book design, book binding, publishing, etc. She was hired immediately by Yale University Press where she worked until 1988 as a Senior Book Designer.

Sally had known Chris when they were in college, but it wasn't until 20 years later that they ran into each other again. Sally had agreed to speak at a book publishing conference that Chris, who at the time had his own publishing company in Connecticut, was organizing and their reunion led to their subsequent marriage. (Both had lost their spouses.) Chris eventually began work at Yale University Press as Production and Design Manager (and Sally's boss). On the side, they set up Summer Hill Books, a book design and production company. When they retired from University Press and moved to Weathersfield, their weekend free-lance work at Summer Hill became their full time occupation. Over the years, they collaborated frequently with University Press of New England and Chelsea Green Press.

A number of capable members have stepped up to edit and assist with the newsletter since Edith Hunter stopped her work as editor in 2004. First Grace Knight took over for the next two years with Will Hunter doing the layout. It was at this time that the newsletter changed from an 8.5 x 14 inch format to the familiar 8.5 x 11 inch page. Becky Tucker assumed both the editor and layout roles in 2006, ably assisted by Barbara Richardson, proofreader extraordinaire. From 2013-2016, the team of Alison Roth, Marina McNaughton and Melissa Snyder took on the roles of editor (and often reporter) while Sally Harris took over proofreading, layout and production. Mike Stankevich and Doolittle's in Claremont began printing for us at the same time. Sally included a sepia tinted photograph in 2013 and by 2014, she printed all color photographs in color. Sally reported

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that the evolution of printing made this an easy improvement. In 2017, two editors stepped down but Alison and Sally continued their collaboration. At the end of 2019, Alison retired from her role as editor but Sally has kept on, ensuring the highest quality publication. As President Willis Wood noted in the April 2005 newsletter, "The Newsletter has brought many members into the Society. It has kept people with Weathersfield connections who live away connected with both the present and past life in Town... For many Society members it is their sole connection with what is going on at the Dan Foster House and the Historical Society." We are immensely grateful to Sally Harris who has brought her exquisite design sense, her proofreading skills and production knowledge to the newsletter for the past ten years. ♡

Signs of Spring

It's been a cold winter, but by late February there were plenty of signs of spring. Our Board of Governors shared a few of their observations:

Bluebirds!

First sap run was February 18 but then it got very cold again and by Town Meeting Day the sap had not run again.

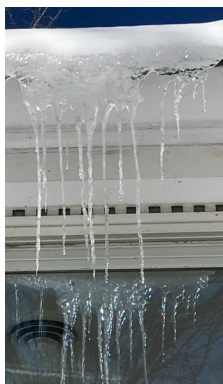
Skunks are beginning to come out of their dormancy, and through March they will begin looking for a mate.

Stronger sun and longer days mean snow is melting off roofs, even when temps don't go higher than the mid 20s.

Saying goodbye to paper-whites and adding forsythia in anticipation of spring.

Wearing sandals to the mail box but boots and mittens later that day.

Many small tracks around the Dan Foster House. ♡



Greeting Cards by deForest Bearse, curator

Willis and Tina Wood have graciously loaned us a collection of vintage and antique Valentine cards. Several of them are addressed to "Augustus Aldrich, Weathersfield Center, Vermont" and one even carries the stamp of the Weathersfield Center Post Office, dated 1902. These cards are representative of the style of greeting card that was popular in the Victorian era, some lacy and delicate and some more in the style of a post card.

People have been exchanging personalized written greetings with one another for hundreds of years. The purpose of the greetings and the medium on which they are conveyed have evolved over the centuries, following closely along with the invention of paper, advances in printing technology, and the development of postal delivery services.

In their earliest form, personalized greetings were exchanged by the Egyptians at the start of the new year to wish each other a good year and by the Chinese to bring luck and to ward off evil spirits. By the early 1400s, paper Valentine greetings were being exchanged by the Europeans, but they were expensive and so were limited in number. The British Museum holds an early Valentine greeting from a John Fairburn dated 17 January 1797 with the poem,

*"Since on this ever Happy day
All Nature's full of love and play
Yet harmless still if my design
Is but to be your Valentine."*

Things did not change much until the mid-1800s with advances in printing technology that made the mass production of paper cards possible. Coupled with that was the introduction of the penny post in the United Kingdom. Cheaper postage rates and better postal delivery routes made greeting cards accessible to the general public and the practice flourished and expanded.

The first mass production of a Christmas card was in 1843, when Sir Henry Cole hired John Calcott Horsley to paint a Christmas greeting card that he could send to his friends. Sir Henry had 1000 of them printed and those that weren't sent to friends and family, he sold for a shilling apiece.

In 1849, Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts, became the first regular publisher of Valentines in the United States.

Greeting cards continued to evolve and by the 1870s they were being sent for many more occasions than the New Year, Valentines, and Christmas, and their production became big business. Today, over a billion cards are sent annually. Hallmark and American Greetings are the two largest producers of greeting cards. And the evolution continues with cards that are miniature works of art, cards that



1843 Christmas Card by John Calcott Horsley



1849 Valentine card by Esther Howland

open to reveal 3-dimensional paper sculptures, animated cards and, of course, electronic cards that play music and videos for the recipient.

Stop by the library and enjoy the wonderful cards that once were Mr. Aldrich's treasures. ∞

Notes from the Library by Patti Arrison

I have received several helpful, important, and intriguing gifts this winter!

Bev Howe-Fluette made a helpful gift, donating newspaper clippings and photographs related to Weathersfield events; materials like these are always useful additions to our vertical files, which people consult whenever they have a “does anyone remember” sort of question. In addition to several books, she donated two scrapbooks that I will

be happy to add to our scrapbook collection. Filled with greeting cards, advertisements, illustrations, and other ephemera, scrapbooks open a window to the time during which the items were compiled. What interested people of that era? What were they doing for fun and entertainment? Who were their friends and relatives? Scrapbooks provide insightful answers to these questions, so I am always happy to receive new examples.

Willis and Tina Wood also donated several items to the library, including two important books representing the printing trade in Windsor: *Meditations Among the Tombs* by James Hervey (published 1814) and *An Essay on Man* by Alexander Pope (1820). Willis's ancestor, Joshua Madison Aldrich, wrote his name on the flyleaf of the latter.

Their gift also included an intriguing indenture, dated September 16, 1857, that Joshua witnessed. I thought an indenture was an agreement between an apprentice and his or her master, so I was surprised to see that this one reads like a prenuptial agreement between Alfreda Hazeltine (nee Fassatt) and Weathersfield's Seth Nichols:

Witness that said Seth Nichols in consideration of a marriage to be had and solemnized between the said Seth Nichols and Alfreda Hazeltine, does for himself, his heirs ... covenant ... that in case only she ... do survive or outlive him, the said Seth is to give and grant the said Alfreda all her household furniture that she now has or may have before said marriage contemplated. Also well and truly proved support and maintain for the said Alfreda for ... the term of one year from and after his ... decease and then at the expiration of ... one year cause to be paid to the said Alfreda the sum of seven hundred and sixteen dollars for her jointure and in lieu and satisfaction of her whole dower in his the said Seth's estate. And the said Seth further covenant that in case ... that the said Alfreda do survive or outlive him ... that she is to have the use of his house where he now resides together with the garden and clothes yard attached during the term of two years from and after his decease.

I sent an inquiry to Judy Russell, the “Legal Genealogist,” who informed me that “an indenture by definition is simply a contract ‘to which two or more persons are parties, and in which these enter into reciprocal and corresponding grants or obligations towards each other.’” She confirmed that this indenture was indeed a prenup and added that “it was very common between propertied people entering into second marriages.”

As she notes, this was a second marriage for both parties. Alfreda's first husband was Thomas Hazeltine (or perhaps Heseltine) of Rockingham, whom she married on February 17, 1841, a year after the death of his first wife, Irena Allbee. Thomas died in 1854. Seth Nichols was first married

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to Sarah or Sally Kidder, with whom he had five children. She died in 1845.

I can't find the date of Seth and Alfreda's marriage, but it must have occurred in or after 1857 and before 1860, when the census states that Seth, age 82, was a farmer and head of a household that included his wife Alfreda, age 58, his son-in-law, William Danforth, who was working as a farm laborer, and his daughter Lucia, a housewife like her stepmother.

Ancestry.com sent me to the probate records for both parties. In his will, dated September 27, 1858, Seth bequeathed \$100 to the American Reform Tract and Book Society, an abolitionist organization, and the remainder of his assets to his surviving children. He noted the "provisions" in the "covenant I made with [Alfreda] in contemplation of marriage."

Alfreda made out her last will and testament on the following day; it was witnessed by Lucia Danforth and Artemas Wheeler, with Joshua M. Aldrich named as executor. She left sums of money to her brothers, Perly Jr. and Abner Fassett, and to her sister, Ann White. The Administrative Bond, dated December 22, 1868, recorded the "cash received of Seth Nichols Estate in accordance with deceased ante-nuptial covenant"—that sum of \$716!

I would love to know more about the circumstances surrounding the marriage. Alfreda died of a "Billious fever" on November 16, 1868, only nine months after Seth died of "old age" in March of the same year. She was living in Andover at the time, evidently unable to enjoy the use of Seth's house, garden, and clothes yard. Were Alfreda and Seth fond of each other when they married? Or did they view their alliance as a "marriage of convenience" that provided Alfreda with the shelter of a household, Seth with a manager for that household? I suppose we will never know—but I like to imagine that Seth and Alfreda were content, spending their "golden years" in mutual support and esteem.

I am always happy to receive gifts for the library. I never know what the gifts will be—but I always know that they will be helpful, important, or intriguing! ☺

The Weathersfield Historical Society Newsletter is published in spring, summer, and fall by the Weathersfield Historical Society. Ellen Clattenburg, President; Tom Leach, Vice-president; Alison Roth, Secretary; Rika Henderson, Treasurer; Patti Arrison, Librarian/Archivist; deForest Bearse, Curator. The Newsletter is free with membership in the Society (individual membership: \$10; family membership: \$20; Contributing: \$35; Sustaining: \$50; Benefactor: \$100). Please send to the Weathersfield Historical Society, PO Box 126, Perkinsville, VT 05151-0126. Additional copies are \$1. Editor: Ellen Clattenburg; layout, proofreader, professional advice: Sally Harris. Printer: Doolittle's PrintServe, Claremont, New Hampshire. To sponsor the Newsletter add \$25 to your membership check. Life memberships are \$200 for individual and \$300 for a couple.

Obituaries *Rebecca W. Tucker*

(For the sake of historical and genealogical research, the Newsletter likes to note the Weathersfield connections from local area obituaries.)

Lucinda Marie (Jillson) Adams (May 18, 1942 – January 2022) grew up in the lower village of Perkinsville, where her father Elba Jillson was hired man for David and Constance Claghorn in the 1950s. Mr. Jillson and wife Lucy (Rogers) Jillson were parents of Nelson Jillson (died in 2019), Rita (Jillson) Griffin (died 2013), Janice Jillson of NM, and Nancy Dulac of Barre VT. Cindy married Eugene Adams in 1958, they had children Betty Jean (died at birth) Richard of Springfield, and Joy Streeter Fletcher of Springfield. Cindy is survived by four grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Maryann (Emery) Allcroft (July 14, 1937 – January 25, 2022) Born in Claremont NH, she so loved Vermont, she purchased a house in Perkinsville in 2005 and lived here until January 2019. She was schooled in Woodstock and attended Burdett Junior College in Boston. She married Richard Allcroft; he died previously. She is survived by three children: Kevin Allcroft, Kristian Allcroft, and Alissa Barrow; all live out of state.

Geraldine Burke (March 8, 1952 – November 13, 2021) lived on Butterfield Hill in Weathersfield. She was wife of Thomas Burke whom she married in 1973. There were three sons who survive: Adam W. Burke, Patrick M. Burke, and Jason T. Burke.

Alton Lewis Curtis Sr. (December 2, 1927 – February 2, 2022) was born son of Josiah P. and Edith L. (Wellman) Curtis in Claremont NH. He married Jennie Viola Bundy (later divorced) and had sons Alton L. Curtis Jr. (wife Linda) of Cumberland VA and Lon Curtis (wife Mary) of Claremont, four daughters Pamela Kingsbury, Franklin NH, Jody Peters and husband Chris, Newport NH, Jeanne Mack and husband Randy, Columbia SC, and Carrie Chessman of Claremont. Three brothers: Josiah Curtis Jr, Clayton Curtis, and Donald Curtis, and sister Irma Boivin, and Shirley Blanchard died previously.

John Lowell Dodge (October 9, 1940 – December 31, 2021) was born son of William "Bill" and Cecile (Leavitt) Dodge of Springfield. He worked for many years with his brothers at Dodge Brothers Concrete based in Weathersfield. He is survived by his brother Joseph and his wife Diane, nieces Jennifer Dodge, Deborah Dodge (Stanley Wisnioski), Amy Dodge, Joanna Lorden (Stewart), and Amanda Dodge (Shadligh), nephews Chris Dodge (Sambra) and Andrew Dodge (Cassandra). Also there are many

grandnieces and nephews. John's brothers and their wives, Robert and Elsie (Gilman) Dodge and Mark and Annette (Davidson) Dodge died previously.

Porter Paddock Hodgdon Sr (May 15, 1938 – January 20, 2022) was born in Orleans VT son of Porter and Reb (Lumbra) Hodgdon. He and his brothers formed the business Hodgdon Brothers in Ascutney in 1956, and were the first and only car crushers in the state. Porter moved his business to Swanton in the early 1970s. He is survived by children Cindy & Dick Morris, Swanton, Jason and Sharae Hodgdon, Swanton, Mary Hodgdon, Swanton and Brian Pion, Berkshire, his current wife Donna (Cowdrey) and her sons George and Scott Gould. All of Porter's siblings have died: Allie, Albert, Narlene, Esther, Darcy, Lynda, and Dewey Hodgdon. Two children have died: Elmer and Porter Hodgdon Jr. There was to be a Life Celebration in Swanton January 25, 2022.

Cheryl Ann (Jarvis) McDerment (August 23, 1951 – January 29, 2022) lived on Thrasher Road, Ascutney with husband Herman McDerment whom she married in 1969. Their daughter Tina survives, as does a grandson Tyler Davidson, both of Ascutney. Also surviving are her mother Corinne (Dubuque) Jarvis LaFountain, Claremont NH, three sisters: Linda, Lori, and Sandra, and a special aunt Virginia (Dubuque) Jarvis. Cheryl's father Richard Jarvis and his wife Millie and stepfather Carlon LaFountain died previously.

William David Merrill (February 25, 1931 – February 11, 2022) also known as David, was born in Perkinsville, son of William and Blanche (Field) Merrill. His father was one of the operators of the J&L power dam equipment in Perkinsville Lower Village. They later moved to Cavendish. David married Joyce Campbell in Randolph VT in 1955. They had children Scott Merrill, and Susan (Merrill) Moore and a granddaughter Miranda Moore. David's sisters Winifred Stack and Elizabeth Walsh died previously. Surviving are sisters Rebecca Sabol of SC and Mary Shumski of NY.

Kim Denton Rhodes (October 17, 1957 – December 6, 2021) was son of Wilmer "Dusty" and Dorothea "Dotty" (Ricker) Rhodes. This family of four children lived on Main Street, Perkinsville. Kim married Denita Pressey in 1981 and they had four children who survive: Bobbi-Jo, Machais, Nathan, and Velora. He is also survived by his siblings Gary Rhodes, Dennis Rhodes, and Cindy Veysey. Kim and Denita operated a taxi service called Days in Town in Springfield for many years.

Robert Elmer Sanford (January 10, 1952 – November 24, 2021) was born the son of Elmer G. and Christina (White)

Sanford in Randolph Vt. This family moved to town and Robert and his sisters attended school in Perkinsville. He married Diane Barton in 1971 in Perkinsville; they later divorced. Their son Chad Sanford died in 1996. Robert worked for Vermont Soapstone Co. as well as the Town of Weathersfield. He is survived by four sisters: Mary Lou Benoit of Randolph, Nancy (and Allen) Churchill of Chester, Sue Ann Griswold of North Springfield, and Janice (and John) Chenier of Chester. There was to be a private graveside service at Plain Cemetery in Perkinsville.

Nancy Leland (Bigelow) Sinclair (May 14, 1942 – December 9, 2021) married John Sinclair in 1967 and they made their home in Springfield for more than fifty years. Nancy had many friends in the Springfield Garden Club. There will be a celebration of her life at the Weathersfield Center Church on May 14, 2022.

Matthew Jeffrey Slade (May 12, 1986 – January 23, 2022) struggled with addiction and died at 35. He was son of Jeffrey Slade of Weathersfield, and Tammy (Heidtmann) Slade of Springfield. He is survived by his parents, grandparents Erma and William Heidtmann, a sister Samantha Slade, and Brittany Hankins and her three children, Braden, Callan, and Ava, as well as Judy and Rick Hebert, godparents.

Jere C. Wright (August 29, 1968 – January 14, 2022) was born in Windham CT, son of Dennis and Ruth (Cooke) Wright. He married Kim Ashline, now of Eustis FL. Jere is survived by his children Nikki and Kenny Hansel, Rebecca Wright, and Emily Wright, all of Weathersfield. His surviving siblings are Susan and Mike Russell, Ascutney; Jeff and Kelley Wright, Newbury; Robert and Lisa Wright, Windsor; and Kevin and Karen Wright, Springfield. His mother Ruth and brother David died previously.

Genealogy Notes: Descendants plan visits to Weathersfield

Pam Hall of LeRoy, Michigan, wrote to us in early 2020 in preparation for a visit east to see where Russel Perkins (1760–1831) and his wife Sarah (Sally) Purchase (1749–1842). Among the interesting notes that Becky added to the genealogy was this: "She was known as Widow Perkins, [and] bought groceries at the Weathersfield Center Store in 1816. She lived to be 93."

Because of Covid, Pam had to delay her visit, but in the meantime, Becky Tucker has been helping her out with genealogical information and she has been combing our publications to learn more about her family.

We look forward to welcoming Pam, her mother, and brother when they visit in June 2022.

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Obituaries (from page 11)

Cutting– Elisabeth Pilcher of Los Angeles CA wrote to ask for information on her ancestor General Jonas Cutting and his son Hiram C. Cutting of Weathersfield. A little looking in Butterfield's *Inhabitants of Weathersfield Vermont 1760–1813* finds his place was located on today's Route 5, opposite Wilgus State Park, and Cutting(s) Hill, named for the family is nearby as well. Called The Bow District 4–27, the brick mansion was last owned by Franklin Tolles, and is now gone. Several Cuttingses are buried in the Hubbard and Bow Cemeteries nearby.

General Jonas' son Hiram C. Cutting (1802–1862) was counted in Weathersfield in the 1850 Census, a butcher, with a wife Sarah and four children, situated next door to one Colston, a hotelkeeper.

Ms Pilcher plans to visit Vermont in the summer and promises to contact the Society when she is here. ☺

Buckets at Lynn and Howard Beach farm on Beaver Pond Road

