

Preserving Manchester's History



18th-century powder horn found in a field at the edge of Manchester Village where Seth Warner is alleged to have stopped on his way to the Battle of Bennington.

“THIS SOCIETY TOOK ITS INCEPTION in the conversations of two or three women of Manchester in the summer and autumn of 1897. These were Miss Hermione Hitchcock Canfield, Miss Julia Frances Hawley and Miss Wilhelmina D. Hawley... The first relic came into possession of the Society in the autumn of 1898 — a powder horn picked up on the field opposite Fairview, at the south end of the Village of Manchester... This curio was presented by Mrs. J. D. Way of Manchester.”

— From the journals of Sarah Cleghorn, a recording secretary of the Manchester Historical Society and local historian.

FROM THE CURATOR

Since it was founded in 1897, the Manchester Historical Society's membership and activities have ebbed and flowed, but there have always been keepers of our shared history who've recorded the events and saved historical artifacts.

Members of the society and those who have served on the board of directors over the last 120 years have made financial contributions, donated artifacts, recorded their memoirs, and participated in presentations. Membership lists and minute books of

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FROM THE CURATOR (continued)

1929.		
Memberships	1929	1930
Black Helen M.	50	50
Brown Ella	50	
Cleghorn Sarah	50	50
Gunnison John J.	50	
Kirby Edw.	50	50
Hollister Ella	50	50
Hollister Laura	50	50
Harley Mrs. M. J.	50	50
Mr. & Mrs. Hard Walter R.	100	100
Mr. & Mrs. Makin Richard	100	100

List of MHS members in 1929.

the society's proceedings were carefully preserved and remain in our collection today at the Manchester Community Library.

Being the curator of this collection is awe inspiring. Being able to reconstruct generations of work that formed our local institutions through individual photographs, handwritten manuscripts, clothing and uniforms, and all manner of pieces from everyday life of yesteryear that now fill the shelves in their gray and tan archival boxes is a great privilege. Here is just a brief overview of what forms the core of our mission.

The earliest document in the MHS collection is a letter concerning the Council of Safety, written July 1777. This was among the cache of documents passed down through the society over the course of the 20th century. As the town geared up for the bicentennial in 1961, Nancy Otis and Edwin Bigelow researched and wrote *Manchester, Vermont: A Pleasant Land Among the Mountains 1761-1961*, the first comprehensive history of the town. As a result of their efforts to find documents, MHS received a large collection of Manchesteriana from John Whipple, now known as the Harris C. Whipple Collection which remains a cornerstone of the collection. We are now in the process of cataloguing and transcribing the documents found in the collection, many of which date back to the late 1700s and early 1800s.

One of the first works of Manchester history is a description of the early settlers and the American Revolution written by Judge John S. Pettibone (1786-1872) in the 1860s at his farm (today's Wilcox Dairy). The original is at the Vermont Historical Society but we have a copy. Judge Loveland Munson (1843-1921) gave his oration, "The Early History of Manchester," on



Council of Safety document, 1777

December 27, 1875, to a full house at the Music Hall on Union Street which was so highly regarded it was printed into a booklet in 1876. L.D. Coy's *Recollections* (1897), and *Manchester in Vermont History* by Carl M. Chapin (1932) were both published by the Manchester Historical Society and copies are part of the collection.

Over the decades many community members saved precious items which found their way to MHS. Many others recorded stories and kept photograph albums. Sarah Cleghorn kept numerous handwritten journals that are filled with information about Manchester in the late 1800s and early 1900s. G. S. Bennett, owner and editor of the *Manchester Journal*, wrote a column called "Off the Shelf" in which he included many stories of the past. In the last decades of the 20th century, Mary Hard Bort also wrote articles of local history for the



Colonial-era candle snuffer from the Lathrop Collection. Many items in the collection came from the Lathrop family who were early settlers in the southern end of Manchester, adjacent to what is now the Wilcox farm.

Manchester Journal, which in 2005 were compiled into her book, *Manchester: Memories of a Mountain Valley*. The late Albert H. Wessner saved more of Manchester's history than anyone before or since and his niece Lisa remains steward of his collection.

Collaborating and sharing resources with other keepers of Manchester's history--Burr and Burton Academy, the Ekwanok Country Club Library and Museum, Hildene—is an ongoing endeavor. Through the digitization of the collection, as well as interesting programs, events and displays, we will keep the spotlight on our past and bring history off the shelves. From our neighbors to followers who live around the globe, through social media we are capturing the comments of those who have a connection to Manchester who want to share memories of days gone by, providing a rich and varied portrait for the generations of tomorrow who will call Manchester home. — Shawn Harrington, Curator

IF YOU HAVE artifacts, documents, or memorabilia related to the history of Manchester, our curator, Shawn Harrington, would be very interested to speak to you. You can contact him at info@manchesterhistoricalsocietyvt.org or through private message on Facebook.



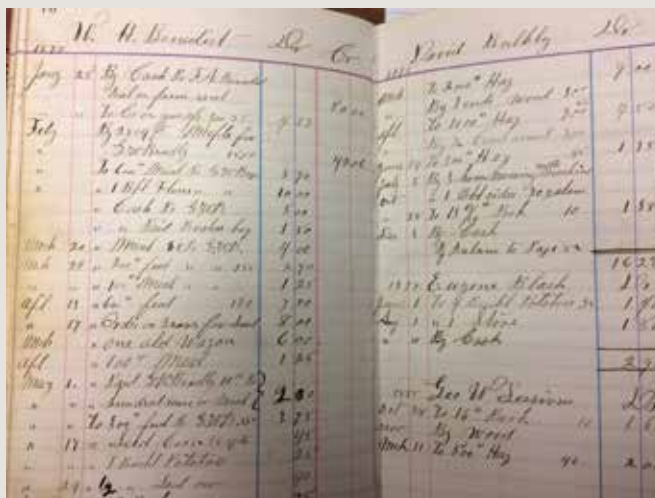
What do you think that word is?

In a recent book entitled *Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives*, Susan Howe describes how when we encounter manuscripts, sometimes, for a moment, something opens up and can be seen. Some aspect of time lets loose, becomes unstable. A sort of transformation takes place when the relics of the past invade our present. This is a wonderful description of our encounter with the many manuscripts, letters, and documents in the MHS collection. Volunteers Helen Gawlik and Louise Hughes have been diligently at work transcribing and cataloging manuscripts for over a year and MHS is greatly in their debt for this important work.

SAMPLE OF GIFTS TO THE COLLECTION IN 2017



This brown silk jacket is the top of a ladies dress belonging to Flora Marsh Reed (1864-1908) given by her descendant Robert Fowler, a former president of MHS.



Bradley & Blackmer sales ledger 1872-1873, given by Heidi and Roger Harwood. Bradley & Blackmer was one of the first businesses in Manchester Depot, opening in 1867, and their store is today's Firefly Restaurant.



Wooden paddle menu from the Sirloin Saloon, given by the family of Paula Morgan (1949-2016) who was a waitress at the popular restaurant originally called the Five Flies.



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The mission of the Manchester Historical Society is to collect, preserve, interpret and present the story of Manchester through the research collection, exhibitions, programs, and publications.

1897 SOCIETY

artlicensing



PROPRIETORS CIRCLE

THE BARNSTEAD INN
at Withers Farm

THE EQUINOX
A LUXURY COLLECTION
GOLF RESORT & SPA

SINCE 1940
rk MILES
BUILDING MATERIALS SUPPLIER

STRATTON
magazine

TPW COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT
PROPERTY SERVICES
VACATION RENTALS
REAL ESTATE
Go Play. Leave the Work to Us.

UNION CLUB



Honoring Longtime Contributors

When we decided it was high time we honored three members of MHS who have given so many years of service to the society, it was clear that something special needed to be done. So we inaugurated the Exceptional Service Award to permanently acknowledge members who deserve recognition for their contributions to the preservation of Manchester's history. Our first three inductees joined us on November 28 to receive our thanks and a certificate of recognition. Their names will be the first inscribed on a plaque that will hang outside our room at the Manchester Community Library.



Ted Hopkins, Judy Harwood, and Terry Tyler

TED HOPKINS, a well-known building contractor, has been responsible for more historic salvation in the homes he has worked on than can be counted. A former Manchester fire chief, Ted spearheaded the efforts to get the society's 19th-century hand-powered water pumper out of storage and into the hands of a first-class restoration specialist. No one knows where the name came from but "Little Eli," as the pumper is fondly known, is now in perfect condition to move into the future. In his spare time Ted has been building a magnificent collection of Stanley tools. The Manchester Historical Society is very fortunate to have such a talented and gracious person to call on.

JUDY HARWOOD has probably held every position in the society's leadership during her several decades of association with MHS. A descendant of the Lathrop family, one of Manchester's earliest, Judy's love of history and her strong connection to Manchester led her to devote her talents to doing whatever was needed to keep MHS going strong. Her dedication has been unwavering and we are so grateful for her contributions over the years to everything from taking minutes to running programs to being co-editor of our Arcadia book, *Manchester*.

TERRY TYLER has been a consistent force for historic preservation all his life and his dedication to the Dorset Historical Society is well known. Luckily for MHS, his interest extended to Manchester and he served on the board of MHS for many years where his devotion to preservation was exceeded only by his eloquent storytelling abilities and his love of a good joke. Terry has given MHS many fine artifacts, books and documents. His expertise in the history of American firearms was very much in evidence when MHS decided to repair (rather than restore) the 18th-century fowling musket that had belonged to Gideon Ormsby, given by his descendants to MHS in 2014.

We thank each one of our honorees for their generosity to the Manchester Historical Society.

Legacy Giving

MHS is dedicated to saving the photos, documents and artifacts that tell Manchester's story, but we are also very much concerned with the future. If you are interested in preserving the history of Manchester and sharing it with future generations, we invite you to consider including MHS in your estate planning. A simple bequest in your will is a very easy way to ensure that our work will continue for many years into the future. If you are interested in arranging for a bequest to MHS, please speak to your attorney or give us a call at 802.549.4582. Thank you!