



ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Essex Town-Est. 1763 Essex Jct.-Est. 1892 Essex Comm. Historical Society-Est. 1991

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President's Message

I would like to welcome Molly Brown, who has graciously stepped in to fill the shoes of Dick and Lucille Allen, as editor of our newsletter, The ECHO.

The museum opened on June 6, 2010. We had a scavenger hunt at the museum, encouraging people to locate different artifacts that are on display. Tyson Vallyou, music teacher at the Founders Memorial School, brought a string band to perform at our opening.

We took part at the 2010 Vermont History Expo. "Back to the Land Again" and "Vermont Heritage Ways For Today" were the themes. Our display was "evolution" of Essex farms and centered on Chapin's farm in Essex. Much thanks to Barb Chapin and Laurie Jordan for compiling our display.

Polly McEwing continues to volunteer much of her time entering data about our collection into the computer, and Sherry Norton is continuing work on the cataloguing of many donations from people wanting to help preserve Essex history. Without the help of many volunteers, our museum would not have been open this summer and early fall. Thank you so much to all who willingly gave up their Thursday nights and Sunday afternoons to make our museum available to the public.

The 1805 Schoolhouse is looking great! Much thanks goes to Hubie Norton and Sandy Packard for all their time and hard work on this old building. The Essex Classical Institute generously donated money to finish the outside work, which included a new roof and the siding for the remaining side of the building.

Eva Clough, President



THE ECHO

The newsletter of the
Essex Community Historical Society
Essex and Essex Junction, Vermont
Published twice a year, spring and fall.
Fall 2010

Edited by Mildred "Molly" Brown

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DUBARTIS "BARTY" WILLARD of Essex—Poet, Wit, and Pioneer!

By Tim Jerman

The Town of Essex was chartered in 1763, but not settled until 1783. The first six known settlers included Samuel and William Smith, who settled near Jericho; David Hall and Willard Blood settled in the Brown's River area, and; Jonathan Winchell and Dubartis "Barty" Willard, settled farther west near the Winooski River. The earliest settlers came by way of Williston and sought out fertile land close by rivers and streams. Barty and Winchell settled on land now part of the Whitcomb farm in Essex Junction, making it both one of the first and last farms in the area. (1)

Barty Willard was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts in 1747; his ancestors had arrived in Boston in 1634. Barty was one of the original Green Mountain Boys, and although he did not follow the Allen brothers up from Connecticut, he did have a lifelong connection with them. It is likely he hooked up with the Allens when Ethan lived briefly in Barty's hometown of Sheffield. Ira Allen had visited the area as early as 1772 on an expedition up the Winooski River from Burlington. Barty reported being a "minute man" during the Revolutionary War, winding up in Vermont from Massachusetts because he "was off in a minute after the war—I owed too many debts." In fact he was a Minute-man in the very first encounter of the war, and then shows up several times in service to Massachusetts, as late as 1781. (2)

The Town of Essex was officially organized in 1786, and its first representative to the legislature was Barty Willard. In three years the population of Essex had grown to 72, with 26 families and 26 eligible freeman voters; the minimum population to organize and be recognized with representation was about 50. The first meeting was held on March 22 at the home of Essex's first doctor, Elikanah Billings, on what is now the River Road (Rt. 117). Barty received 23 votes in an election held in September. He was also the town's first moderator, one of the first selectmen, and was later

elected "fence viewer," highway supervisor, and lister. The original handwritten minutes of the March meeting and all subsequent annual meetings can still be viewed in the Town Clerk's Office. (3)

Going to the legislature was an ordeal in itself in those days due to the difficulty of travel on primitive roads. Since 1777, Vermont had been an independent republic, and statehood did not come until 1791. In the interim period there was a House of Representatives (no Senate until 1836) which met twice a year for about a month. The location rotated. In Barty's term the assembly met in October 1786 in Rutland, and in March 1787 in Bennington. (4)

Barty Willard served just one term in the legislature; maybe the round trips to Rutland and Bennington were enough to cure him of any lasting interest in state affairs! He stayed active locally, serving as constable of Essex in 1789. He was a colorful character and well-known for his wit and poetry. A wheelwright and blacksmith by trade, Barty was known as an eccentric genius. His first comic episode recorded to history involved a visit to Governor Chittenden's house in Williston on his way to take his seat in the legislature. The Governor kept a tavern in his house, and being well acquainted asked:

"Well, Barty, where are you going?"

"To the assembly, your Honor," replied Barty.

"What, *you* are going to the assembly, Barty?"

"Yes, your Honor. For the want of better stock they took me."

"Well, well," said the Governor, "it's a misfortune that we have got so poor in some of the towns about here, as not to be able to get good iron and have to use wood for wedges, "implying that Barty was not up to standard.

"That's a fact," replied Barty quickly, "but misfortune never come single; it's a greater misfortune that the state is so poor as not be able to produce a good well-made beetle but is compelled to use an old basswood maul to drive them with."

Touché! Apparently Governor Chittenden enjoyed Barty's wit as he often repeated the story. (5)

In 1786, work in Essex consisted of cutting/hauling timber, building sawmills, growing crops for winter use, and surveying. Life was extreme-

ly difficult. The state was filling up with people, but there was essentially no money, and conflicting land claims were leading to serious problems around the state. In Essex, wheat was accepted as payment for the meager taxes being collected for road improvements.

A legal currency was one of the big issues facing Barty and the 1786-87 legislature. Vermont coins had been made legal in 1782, but they were of little value at the time. Since most settlers were poor and had borrowed for their land, foreclosures from unforgiving landlords were forcing people off their land. There was a move to create a paper currency to provide liquidity, but it failed. Barty's vote was not recorded, so it is possible he had gone home for some reason lost to history. The legislature did relieve some pressure that year by designating as legal tender cattle, beef, pork, sheep, wheat, rye and corn.



In 1790, Barty moved his wife Lucretia and one-year old son Levi to Burlington, possibly because a flood in 1789 had wiped out the crops in Essex and it was a very difficult winter. They lived on the corner of Pearl Street and a street that now bears his name, Willard Street. He owned a quarry at the south end of town near what is now the Burlington Country Club. The quarry was run by successive generations of Willards and provided stone for most of the prominent buildings in the city. The Willards became very prosperous in the 19th century. (6)

Barty continued to serve his community as his family grew in Burlington. In 1793 he was elected a "hog Hayward" or "hog reeve." This was something of a comical position later given to newly wed males as a ritual; they were supposed to keep an eye on wayward roving pigs! One or two people could do this job, but many more were later "elected" to serve together.

As Barty aged, he fell into "intemperate" habits and became almost blind, but that did not keep him from penning his own humorous epitaph:

Beneath this stone blind Barty lies,
By drinking rum who lost his eyes
Here let his carcass lie and rot
Who lived a fool and died a sot.

Barty died in Burlington in 1815, aged 68. He appears with two sons on a veteran's list for the War of 1812, but it is unclear what his role was or if he later succumbed to disease as did so many Burlington-based soldiers. (7)

Barty is buried in beautiful Elmwood Cemetery in Burlington next to his wife and nine other relatives from the next few generations. If his witty "epitaph" made it to his headstone, it has long since been erased by time and weather. Only the words "Dubartis Willard" are still legible. Lucretia's grave is inscribed: "Make peace with God, to Christ for refuge fly, and join the saints

In shining worlds on high." Apparently, she was much more devout than Barty, and it is a shame that we don't have more of a record of her life.

Barty can fairly claim the title of first citizen of Essex; wheelwright, blacksmith, quarryman, soldier, patriot, husband, father, politician, poet, wit, rhymer, drinker, and hog Hayward! His was an extraordinary life in the new Republic of Vermont, and just one of many great stories from early Essex.

The end

Mr. Jerman goes on to reflect: As a current state representative to the Vermont legislature from Essex Junction, it gave me goose bumps to locate Barty Willard's family grave and reach back in time to touch the stone of the first of many distinguished citizens to have served Essex and later Essex junction in state government.

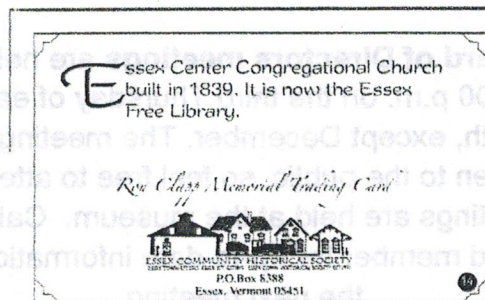
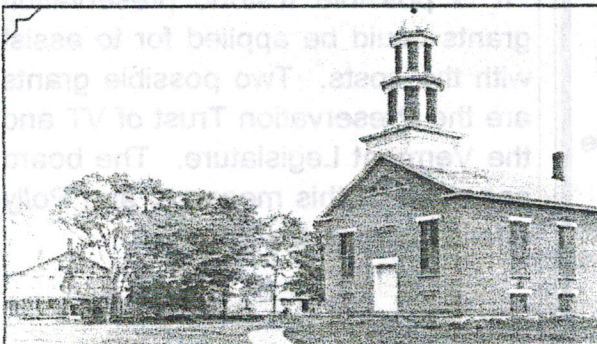
The photograph on page 3 is the headstones of Barty and his wife.

- (1) *Vermont Historical Magazine*, p. 780, by L. C. Butler, M.D.
- (2) *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution, Vol 17*, p 383.
- (3) *History of Essex*, p. by Frank Bent, 1963.
- (4) *Governor and Council, Vol 1*.
- (5) *Vermont Historical Magazine*, p. 782—783, by L.C. Butler, M.D.
- (6) *A Record of the Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont*, ed. Hiram Carleton. Lewis Publishing Co., New York/Chicago 1903.
- (7) *History of Essex*, p. By Frank Bent, 1963.

AWARD GIVEN TO ESSEX COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The ECHS received an Educational Outreach Category Award from the Vermont Historical Society for their Ron Clapp Memorial Trading Card Sets. These cards are given to teachers and students for their use on the Essex town walking tours. The award was presented at the Annual League Meeting on October 29, which was held in Bennington, Vermont.

For those of you who did not know, Ron Clapp was one of the founders of the ECHS. He developed a walking tour that he gave to second graders. The tour went from Essex Commons to Towers Road and Alder Lane. Ron Clapp was many things: administrator, principal, teacher, and always a historian.



From the Editor

First, I would like to thank the Essex Community Historical Society board members for granting me the opportunity to edit their newsletter. I am honored.

As this is my first time editing a historical newsletter, I welcome any and all feedback. If there is something you would like to see in the newsletter, please let me know. I can be reached at:

Guinevere_ny@yahoo.com

Until next time, take care and keep the history alive!

Molly

Searching for:

Does anyone have information on Clite Loella Burt? If you can help, please contact Eva with the information.

Thank you!

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Polly McEwing was joined by ten members of the ECHS for a night at the museum. Polly cooked a meal which was enjoyed by all prior to the night's festivities.

After dinner the members searched for catalogued items that needed to be located. With a specifically dated description list in hand, the members looked in the museum bookcase, collection boxes, and among the displays for documents, records, books and other items within the museum. It was a huge success!

If you were not able to take part in this Night at the Museum do not despair; another is hoped for next year!

Upcoming Events

Friday December

Tree lighting and sing-a-long on the Town Common in Essex Center. Meet at 6:15 p.m. at Essex Elementary School. We will then proceed to the Town Common to light the tree and sing holiday songs. Refreshments, compliments of the Girl Scouts, will be served at the elementary school.

Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month, except December. The meetings are open to the public, so feel free to attend! Meetings are held at the museum. Call any board member for up-to-date information on the next meeting.


TOWER STATUS

At the June 2010 board meeting, Will Parkinson asked if the ECHS would be interested in pursuing the preservation of the stone water tower at Fort Ethan Allen in Essex. The tower is in need of repairs before it can be re-opened to the public.


It is possible historic preservation grants could be applied for to assist with the costs. Two possible grants are the Preservation Trust of VT and the Vermont Legislature. The board approved of this measure, and Polly offered to write the grants.




THE 1805 SCHOOLHOUSE









Work continues to be done on the schoolhouse, and the efforts of the volunteers can be seen! Hubert Norton has finished the clapboards and thanks to the team the door now has hinges. A second door has also been built.



Steve Bean has been doing the blacksmith work that has been greatly appreciated. Gil Meyers was asked to make a black and white sign for the schoolhouse.



Fourth and fifth graders from the Founder's School in Essex visited the Schoolhouse. They made ink from butternuts, and then took a feather quill and practiced writing in an ABC hornbook. Before going to the schoolhouse, they first stopped at the museum and played their instruments and took part in a scavenger hunt. According to Polly, they had a lot of fun!



Essex Community Historical Society Board of Directors , 2010—2011
(Denotes year of term expiration)

Eva Clough, President (11)
42 Brigham Hill Road
879-0849

Sherry Norton, Vice President (13)
9 Maplelawn Drive
879-7334

Laurie Jordan, Secretary (13)
259 River Road
879-6467

Ann Gray, Treasurer (11)
28 Rosewood Lane
878-4088

Barb Chapin (11)
129 Chapin Road
879-1145

William Parkinson (12)
P.O. Box 40
Hinesburg, VT 05461
482-3113



Kathy Dodge (13)
P.O. Box 8264
Essex, VT 05451
878-4272

Katherine Reynolds (11)
88 Park Street
878-2193

Polly McEwing (12)
5 Doubleday Lane
879-6862

Tim Jerman (12)
41 South Hill Drive
878-2972

John Duby (11)
62 Learned Drive
Westford, VT 05494
879-1841

Mary O'Neil (13)
10 South Hill Drive
878-8214

DONATIONS:

Pam MacDougal: Harriet Powell's personal writing desk.

Alan Luzzatto: Civil War memorabilia, including Essex Town Records of Personal Tax Rolls for 1866.

Katherine Reynolds: enlarged copies of a Chapin's aerial view postcard.

Tim Jerman: reprint of 1868 Civil War records which talk about every Essex resident/soldier by L.C. Butler, MD.

Ina Isham: copy of "The Letter Edged in Black." This letter was written by Hattie Hicks Woodbury and sent to S. G. Butler Esq.

Ann Henderson: donated antique clothing.

Betsey Melvin: two of her scrapbooks which contain Essex related news articles from *The Suburban List* and the *Burlington Free Press*.

Essex Classical Institute: \$2,000.00 for the restoration of the 1805 Schoolhouse.

THANK YOU!!!

Essex Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451

Membership Form

Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership at this time.
Or you can pass this on to someone who would like to be a member.

Thank you!

Your dues will help us to add to our collection of Essex memorabilia, maintain the museum, publish the ECHO, and sponsor historical programs.

_____ New Member _____ Renewal of membership

Name(s) _____

Mailing address _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone number _____

_____ Individual Membership	\$10.00
_____ Family Membership	\$15.00
_____ Senior Membership (60 and over)	\$ 5.00
_____ Lifetime: individual, married, civil union	\$100.00

Make checks payable to:
Essex Community Historical Society.

Short Stuff

Please take a close look at your address label. The expiration date of your membership is noted. Three stars denote a life membership. You can use the form in this newsletter to update your membership. Or, consider giving a membership to the historical society as a gift.

We are always looking for interesting information and photographs on Essex and Essex Junction history for the newsletter. Original photos can be scanned and returned. Contributions are welcome. Please mail them to : Essex Community Historical Society, P.O. Box 8388, Essex, Vermont 05451.

Presentations by ECHS:

Laurie Jordan and Barb Chapin presented a program to the Green Mountain Folklore Society's spring meeting on May 1st at the Alliance Church. Their topic was Essex farming history and they took turns "reading" quotes from previous interviews, letters and research.

We participated in the Vermont History Expo in Tunbridge, Vermont June 26th and 27th. Over 200 people stopped by our display.

In July Sherry and Hubie Norton represented ECHS at the Block Party. Unfortunately the Chapin farm display was in a less visible area and not many people stopped by.

ECHS will be working with the town select board to plan the 250th birthday celebration in 2013!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Creamery bottles of Essex Junction,

- 1 pint liquid FRED YANDOW MILK AND CREAM, ESSEX JCT, VT.
- 1 quart FRED YANDOW MILK AND CREAM, ESSEX JCT, VT
- One pint THE KNOLL, ESSEX JUNCTION, VT
- 1 pint liquid DRURY LANE DAIRY: PURE JERSEY MILK, ESSEX JCT, VT
- 1 pint liquid TYLER MILK CO., R.C.PLACE PASTURIZED PURE MILK ESSEX JUNCT
- One quart liquid CEDRIC DAVIS MILK AND CREAM, ESSEX JCT, VT
- ETHAN ALLEN CREAMERY (front) ESSEX JUNCTION, VT WHY NOT SERVE COTTAGE CHEESE TOMORROW? (back)
- Essex Junction's Racine Bros.
- Brook Knoll (L.H. Marvin)

The Historical Society also purchased a digital camera and tape recorder to capture memories.

Essex Community Historical Society

P.O. Box 8388
Essex, Vermont 05451

Membership Form

Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership at this time.
Or you can pass this on to someone who would like to be a member.
Thank you!

Essex, Vermont 05451

P.O. Box 8388



Renewal of membership

Name(s)

Mailing address

Calendar of Events

(See inside for more details)

**Friday, December 3, 2010
at 6:30 P.M.**

Tree lighting and sing-a-long

