



# Bennington Historical Society News

## Colorized Bennington

April 28, 2019 —2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ada Paresky Education Center of the Bennington Museum.

Callie Raspuzzi, Collections Manager of the Bennington Museum, will explain how Tim Wager converted old black and white photos into color photos. Tim Wager has created three books with old photos of Bennington colorized. Volume III of Wager's book series, *Bennington History: A Colorized Journey through, the 19th-20th Century*, is now on sale in the Bennington Museum gift shop.



The colorizing process started in Europe and spread to Japan, where photographers often collaborated with artists. When the process spread to the United States, photography studios "often hired young single women as colorists." According to Wager, the best selling hand

colorized photographer of all time was Wallace Nutting, a New England minister who took his hobby and turned it into a full time business that spanned nearly 40 years with colorized images seeing their golden years from 1900 to 1940.

This presentation will describe the step-by-step process that begins with glass plate negatives and ends up in a riot of color. Callie Raspuzzi will show examples of contemporary hand-colored images and compare them to Wager's digital work. We will also look at some historic pieces from the Bennington Museum's collection that illustrate the actual colors found on the streets of Bennington in the early 1900s.

**Callie Raspuzzi**, Collections Manager of the Bennington Museum, has been working with the museum's photograph collection for nearly 15 years. Cataloging and digitizing the museum's photograph collection has been one of her major accomplishments during that time. Over the past year, she has been working closely with Wager to provide high quality images from the museum's collection. This project has spurred new research into and surprising information about Bennington's history.

### In this Issue

Dewey Home on Main St. ....	2
Past Presentations .....	3
Vermont History Contest .....	4
Search for Initial Rock. ....	5
Upcoming Programs. ....	5
Continental Storehouse .....	6

## “Dewey Home on Main Street (1861)

From the personal collection of Charles Dewey comes the stereoscopic photo below. Charles tells us, that “the fence, which was in front of the Dewey Homestead on Main Street, was built in 1861. A similar fence, but simpler in design, was there before the 1861 fence was installed.”



The bills for making the fence (shown in the images below) show that the cost of it was \$263.38. What would a fence of that size, which extended from Depot Street to the Catholic Church, cost today?

1312.38 October 5<sup>th</sup> 1861  
 Received of C. E. Dewey Treas.  
 Hundred & Twelve & 1/10 Dollars in full for  
 materials furnished for door yard fence  
 & work done on fence, also in full for  
 books account & demands up to date  
 1861, except an item for one year's rent  
 of Sept 26<sup>th</sup> for one day's water duty  
 to Thos & J. J. Ballman  
 H. Howard

Birmingham July 1<sup>st</sup> 1861  
 Received of C. E. Dewey Treas.  
 1860 April 2<sup>nd</sup> present Office 3<sup>rd</sup> present  
 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup>  
 21<sup>st</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> — \$77.50  
 May 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> — — — — — 100  
 Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> — — — — — 100  
 Paid Pay 1<sup>st</sup> 1861  
 1312.38 Birmingham July 31<sup>st</sup> 1861  
 Received of C. E. Dewey Thirty Six  
 Dollars in full for the 1861 furnished  
 for door yard fence  
 House & Silby

## **View the Past Presentations of the Bennington Historical Society on Video**

The videos listed below were taken by Bennington Historical Society member Jackie Marro. Click on the links below to view the videos.

### *Ethan Allen: Hero or Heel?*

Don Miller discusses the various interpretations of Ethan Allen—a true patriot or one who only served his own self-interests? Did Allen actually want to turn Vermont over to the British? Was he really a hero while in captivity?

### *The Sinking of the Titanic and Its Bennington Passenger*

Alden Graves tells the story of Mr. Jones and the sinking of the Titanic at the Bennington Historical Society meeting in 2012. Charles Cresson Jones, the livestock superintendent at Fillmore Farm in Bennington, went to England to purchase Dorset Longhorn sheep. The owner of the farm provided a first class ticket on the Titanic for Mr. Jones' return trip.

### *The Life and Times of Jedediah Dewey*

The Bennington Historical Society's presentation on the first minister and early settler of the town of Bennington is told by Don Miller, local historian; Jamie Franklin, museum curator; and Charles Dewey, a direct descendant. The speakers discuss Jedediah Dewey's influence on the town. Dewey's iconic tombstone, which has a quotation from Shakespeare on it, is located in the Bennington Museum. A recently carved replica is located in the Old First Church Cemetery.

### *Two American Presidents of Vermont*

Mark Hudson, Executive Director of the Vermont Historical Society, talks about Presidents James Garfield and Chester A. Arthur, who both worked in Pownal, as well as Calvin Coolidge. Candidates such as Theodore Roosevelt, Rutherford B. Hayes, Robert Taft, and Herbert Hoover also visited Vermont.

### **Do You Recognize This Photo?**

This photo of the Woodford Hollow Elementary School school was taken in 1923 by Arthur W. Hewitt, then the Vermont state superintendent of education, who photographed the public schools while he was making his rounds. The school, now a two-room school, was originally white, but later painted red. It was found in the museum's archives by Bob Tegart.



Credit: Permanent Collection of Bennington Museum

## MAUHS Students Qualify for the Vermont History Day Contest

by Don Miller, Vermont History Day Chair

Three Mount Anthony students won high praise for their submissions to the Bennington Historical Society's History paper contest. All three students competed in the Vermont History Day contest on April 6th.

The winning papers were submitted by Rowan Thompson on "The Treaty of Versailles"; Josiah Durfee on "The Age of Vikings," and Adam Restino on "Six Days War."

The students each received Certificates of Excellence and a \$100 stipend from the Bennington Historical Society. The state contest was held on Saturday, April 6 in Burlington on the campus of the University of Vermont.

All three students were able to revise their papers before submitting them to the state. "One of the lessons from this contest is the importance of continually improving your work through multiple revisions," said Don Miller, chair of the Bennington Historical Society contest.

The papers emphasize research and interpretation of subjects written on the theme of "Triumph and Tragedy," according to Miller. This is the fifth year that The Bennington Historical Society has hosted its own Bennington History Day contest as a prelude to Vermont History Day. In the four previous years, MAUHS students finished in the top three at the state contest, qualifying for the National History Day contest.

"We are pleased that our MAUHS students have had such success. This contest requires the students to display skills in three different areas: research, interpretation, and communications. These are skills that one can continue to develop throughout life," according to Bill Morgan, president of the Bennington Historical Society.

"We encourage students to study history and hope that their research and success in this contest will stimulate their interest in a lifetime of learning," said Robert Wolterstorff, Executive Director of the Bennington Museum.

The papers are judged by a select group of individuals who have diverse interests in history, research, writing, and communications. This year's judges include John Likakis, Jane Radocchia, Jamie Franklin, Joe Hall, Bob Tegart, and Robert Ebert. "We hope our feedback to the students will help them on their journeys, developing effective writing skills," said Miller.

"The students had an opportunity to research, analyze, and then design their story around the theme. Having their papers reviewed by local judges is a great opportunity for our local students. To be able to carry that to the state and national level, is even more exciting," said Rick Caswell, the teacher for whom the papers were originally written.

Last year, Alex Thompson finished second at the Vermont History Day contest and then attended the National History Week competition in Washington, D.C.

### Durfee Takes First Place

Josiah Durfee, a sophomore at Mount Anthony, won first place in the senior division essay contest at Vermont History Day on April 6. He plans to compete in the National History Day Contest in June at the University of Maryland.

Durfee's 2,493-word paper outlines a brief history of the Vikings in its first half, while the second half examines the effects of the Vikings on language, culture, even DNA. Over 400 students from across the state registered for the contest.

# The Search for Initial Rock

by Ted Bird, past president of the Bennington Historical Society

In the spring of 1954 four teenagers from Bennington went exploring on Mt. Anthony looking for two things that they had heard about from their classmates: Everett's Cave and Initial Rock. The cave was frequently explored and the rock was a favorite picnic spot. The four eighth graders were George Hohman, Sally Wellington, Mary Ellen Bernhardt and Ted Bird.

They found the cave pretty quickly and went in and explored it for a while. Then they went west through the upper fields of Fillmore Farms looking for the rock. They found it on the north face of the mountain in the middle of the field. At that time the cows from Fillmore Farms used the field for grazing, and the rock was about 50 feet below the tree line. It was about 20 feet long and 6 feet wide and made out of limestone. True to its name it had lots of initials carved on it, some reaching back to the 1890's. The four kids carved their initials on it and took some pictures of it and from it.

In the next few years, Ted went back and took some panoramic pictures from the rock of the valley which included Old Bennington, the Monument, the Old First Church and the town of Bennington.

Years later in 2008 Ted, who had been away for 20 years, wondered where Initial Rock was and what it looked like now. He heard that Donny Wassick explored the mountain a lot and he asked him if he knew where it was. Donny never heard of it but said he'd look for it. Of course, over the years, the meadows were no longer used for grazing, and the rock was no longer in a field, but in the woods. He and his dog Izze looked and looked for many weeks but to no avail. Then one day Donny saw a small spot where no trees were growing; cleared it off and it was a rock, but it didn't have any initials on it. But to the west he saw another clearing and cleaned it off and there were initials on it but not the ones of the four kids from 1954. Then further to the west he saw a much larger clearing and upon clearing it off found many initials and the ones from 1954.

He told Ted and brought him up there into the woods to see Initial Rock after half a century. It had changed in color from light beige to dark gray. It also had some initials on it from the 1960's and 70's. And Donny and

Ted carved a new set of initials saying it had been re-discovered in 2008.

Of course it's no longer a popular spot for people to go and picnic because it's not in the middle of a field any more or visible from West Road but hidden in the woods. Now it will remain a mystery rock for the ages

## Walloomsack Review Volume 23 Available

The latest [Walloomsack Review](#) focuses on the history of African-Americans in Vermont and how Vermonters engaged with the civil rights movement. Phil Holland investigates the black youth portrayed in a painting of a scene after the Battle of Bennington. Holland concludes that he was a servant of Moses

Robinson. Jen Shakshober writes of a Ku Klux Klan murder of Joseph Shoemaker. Ruth Bert Ekstrom and Avis Hayden describe three letters from Newton Gould, who moved to Kentucky during the Civil War. And Tyler Resch writes of a Vermont school teacher who moved to Mississippi during the civil rights movement to be a community organizer.

## Upcoming Meetings

The meetings listed below are from 2:00 pm to 4:00pm in the Ada Paresky Education Center of the Bennington Museum.

**May 19, 2019:** Tyler Resch, "William Lloyd Garrison in Bennington"

**June 16, 2019:** Bill Morgan, "David Redding, British Spy"

## The Continental Storehouse: Myth or Reality?

by Ray Rodrigues

We've always believed the British had Bennington as a target during the Revolution when they stumbled into the Battle of Bennington. Specifically, they hoped to capture the Continental Storehouse.

But was there really Continental Storehouse, or is that simply a story passed down through the generations?

Bob Hoar, historian and docent at the Bennington Battlefield State Historic Park, presented the results of his research at our March meeting. His research has revealed that the Continental Storehouse was actually built shortly after the Battle, about November 1777.

At one point, three military supply depots once stood near where the Battle Monument stands today: the State Arms House, the Continental Storehouse, and the State Storehouse Supply Depot. Most likely, a barn owned by John Fassett and the Robinson family held the military supplies that the British wanted to capture. Fassett was a storekeeper, a deacon in the Church and captain of the first militia company in Bennington.

In addition to the military stores, Gen. Burgoyne was after approximately 1000 cattle and horses in the area of the storehouse and

the farms nearby. Isaac Tichenor, future governor of Vermont, had a storehouse built in November 1777, and in 1780 a State Arms House was also built.

In 1798, Ralph Earl painted a broad view of Bennington that now hangs in the Bennington Museum. Just left of center, three buildings can be seen—the three storehouses.



Credit: Detail of Ralph Earl Painting from the Permanent Collection of the Bennington Museum

Hoar's talk included information on the daily rations distributed to Continental soldiers, current sites of buildings in existence in 1777, how individual merchants provided the supplies, and the life of Isaac Tichenor.

### Bennington Historical Society Board Members

*Officers:* Bill Morgan, President; Anne Bugbee, Vice-President; Charles Dewey, Secretary; President-Elect, Don Miller; Treasurer; Joe Hall

*Members:* Beverley Petrelis, Ted Bird, Jackie Marro, Jane Radocchia, Scott Maguire, Ray Rodrigues

Do you have an item you'd like to share through our newsletter--an historical anecdote, something from your family history, an historical artifact, a question for someone else to answer, a remembrance from Bennington's past? If so, send it to Ray Rodrigues at [raymond\\_rodrigues@msn.com](mailto:raymond_rodrigues@msn.com)