

Dondi Dexter, Editor  
 Ashley Cyr, Contributing Editor  
 vhs.newslettereditor@gmail.com

# VASSALBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM located at:  
 327 Main Street, East Vassalboro, ME  
 P.O. Box 13, N. Vassalboro, ME 04962  
 Telephone: (207) 923-3505

## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Have you been by our Harness Shop and Blacksmith Shop recently? Both buildings are getting a facelift thanks to member support and a grant from the 1772 Foundation in cooperation with the Maine Preservation Society. In addition, Ina's Barn (next to the grange) will be getting a new side door soon. If you drive by and see workers, please stop by and check on the progress.

That's not all! The museum the work room floor has been stripped and the walls painted. It was a lot of work, but it will look and feel so much better! The floor will be finished in the near future.

We recently had some former students stop in for a visit. It is amazing how different it feels from when they were going to school here. They promised to come back!

There are several years of 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation photos missing, including 1957 and 1968. If you have those or any others, please check with us to see if we have them. It would be wonderful to have them through the years. We also like grammar school photos. If you have any of those you would like to share, please do. If you are a teacher, and have kept or can keep an album of your students' names and photos – we would be happy to have them.

We have been busy with visitors from a variety of places. It is so fun to share our museum and town history with them.



If you have visited the museum recently, you must have noticed our momentary pride and joy: the Native American display with clothing, arrow heads, baskets, art, and more. We were so excited to be able to have such a beautiful exhibit for you all and you seemed to be just as pleased! Interest in Native American history in our town has seemed to skyrocket as of late. With that being said, I would like to point out a new addition to the display. Three books by Donald Soctomah preserving the history of the Passamaquoddy people in Maine and New Brunswick. These accounts go all the way back to 1800 and touch on everything from politics and public health to cultural stories and traditions. We invite you to come visit and enjoy these writings and the vast wealth of knowledge they contain.

*By Ashley Cyr*



I always say there's something for everyone here at the Vassalboro Historical Society and Museum. No matter what interests you, we are bound to have a collection that will speak to you. As the curator, I get to see all these bits and pieces and compile them into the collections we present to you now. We try our best to arrange all the tidbits into stories that remind people of a time long gone, but I must admit some stories become lost to time no matter our efforts. And for that reason I would like to start sharing the pieces of interest I find randomly through my work.

The first piece I would like to share, was shared with me by our volunteer Dawn. It is a photocopied journal of Kahlil A. Totah, a Palestinian boy who came to America and studied at Oak Grove Seminary. It reads similarly to a novel and is just as enjoyable. The most interesting part of this find was the little treasure hunt I was able to accomplish in our library. Mr. Totah graduated from Oak Grove in 1907, so I found myself perusing the collection of Oak Leaves we have in that year for any sign of him. I assumed it was a ridiculous and futile search, but I was proven wrong. To my surprise and delight, I found articles that he himself had written for the paper. Even more exciting, I found that Arthur Winslow was in fact the Editor-in-Chief of a few volumes that year (those volumes even have his signature in the front!). Winslow was Totah's roommate and friend during his time at Oak Grove and the two remained friends even after college. What had me kicking my feet in pure girlhood joy, however, was seeing that Ermina Jones (later to be Ermina Totah, wink wink) was also the Editor-in-Chief of a few volumes that year. She is mentioned in Totah's journal: "The beautiful face, white dress, golden hair and white ribbon have stuck in my memory and I hope they will as long as I live."

*By Ashley Cyr*

As I am writing this, I'm looking at the photograph of Betty Taylor perched on the top of my desk. Her soft smile gazes at the wall of carefully preserved information behind me and I am reminded of all the work she put into making it happen. I am grateful I have a picture to memorialize her here in the Museum's library. While we as a society take in any number of artifacts from the public, we especially appreciate photos. Our library and document room is brimming with images of people and places passed and we want to continue that collection. While items, clothing, and documents are always welcomed and important; I feel that pictures allow us to truly envision what Vassalboro was like long before I or even my parents were born. Snapshots of daily life tell stories that might have otherwise been forgotten. If you have any photographs (family, school, community events) you would like to share with the Museum, we would love for you to stop by!

*By Ashley Cyr*



Raymond R. Manson was one of the Vassalboro Historical Society's founders, a historian, and a prolific writer. Thanks to his research we have in our collection a notebook of *VASSALBORO SHIPS – Vessels Built in Vassalboro from 1801-1853*. It notes that the list of vessels was taken from the records of the Bath Customs House and compiled by the Marine Society of Maine. It does not claim to be a complete list of all vessels which may have been built at Vassalboro.

In 1801 a schooner named *Antelope*, was built by owner J. O. Page. The Master of the 108-ton vessel was Enoch Jewett.

The *Hannah & Martha*, also a schooner with a weight of 93 Tons was built in 1802 by owner John Agry. The Master was Stephen Toby.

The list continues with schooners *Eunice & Sally*, and *Jane*. In 1809 the brig *Union* was built by James Thatcher, the owner was Benjamin Brown Jr., and the Master was William Lowell. It weighed 182 Tons.

In 1811 the ship *Native*, weighting 232 tons was built by Joseph Wadsworth, the owner G. C. Child and Master Calvin Ballard. Schooners and brigs were the most common vessels, although in 1817 a sloop weighing 53 tons was built by James Thatcher, and the owner and Master was Lewis Thatcher.

In 1838, the steamer *Minerva* was built weighting 54 tons and was owned by J. Southwick, with Nathen Faunce serving as Master.

The last type of ship shown in the list was a bark (barque), the *Angeline B. Sturgis*, built in 1850 weighing 221 tons, the builder was Joseph Richardson, the owner was I.D. Sturgis, and the Master was J. D. Carlisle.

A lot more information is available about the various vessels. Stop by for a visit to learn more.

Coming in March, 2025 to a bookstore near you and also available at the Vassalboro Historical Society and other local spots – Vassalboro's own Arcadia Photographic History book.



Calling all former **GIRL SCOUTS** or leaders – do you have uniforms, sashes or badges or photos from our Scout troops? We only have a couple of photos, and we are sure there are more. We do not have uniforms, badges, sashes or anything else. Please help us recover the past.

We also want **4-H, CIVIL AIR PATROL, GROUND OBSERVATION CORPS**, and any other **YOUTH ORGANIZATION** from Vassalboro. What group did you join or lead? Do you have photos or objects to share? We recently received a lot of items chronicling the Boy Scouts, but our other groups are lacking in info.



Did you know that you can take a walk down Webber Pond in 1918 with the help of the Webber Pond Road History written by George Weston Coleman on February 15, 1918. He talks about two reasons that the sides of the roads were fenced with stone walls. "First to rid the fields of the rocks as they cleared the land and second to save buying other kind of fencing or building other kinds, as the stones laid up well made a good fence."

He started at the top of what is known as "Wiggins Hill" and described the buildings and the people from there to the "house now owned (in 1918) by Mrs. Ella Rowe across the trackside of the Pond."

One of the farms was described as follows: *"We next come to the farm now owned by Mrs. Ursula Wentworth where she is still living at the advanced age of 90 years with her daughter Mrs. Charles Newell. She and her husband Noah Wentworth lived on this small farm of 20 acres or 25 for many years and raised up a large family of 11 children. This land was formerly owned by Mr. Cox known as Squire Cox who married a Miss Lydia Wentworth sister of Noah Wentworth and daughter of Ichabod and Rhoady Wentworth father and mother of Noah Wentworth. Noah Wentworth built the house about 75 years ago. The old barn that was originally built there was torn down about 20 years ago and another one built by Mr. Charles Newell. This barn after a few years was leveled to the ground by a young cyclone which came along one aft about 3 Oc. I believe another new barn was built in the same spot which is now standing."*

I found a brief paragraph of my family home. *"We next come to the home of William Kane [Cain]. These buildings were built by him. The land was once owned by John Sturgis and after his death by Josuah Robbins."*



Built by William Cain

From the Annual Reports of the Officers of  
the Town of Vassalboro for the Municipal  
Year Ending March 1, 1912

#### Public Library Report

The Library Association gave to the town their collection of books, numbering 277 volumes. This year 147 volumes have been added with money raised by the town and given by the state. Two books have been given by an interested person; 38 volumes have been received from the state library, making a total of 464.

During the year, 1441 books have been taken from the library; these have gone into 98 different homes, and 166 subscribers have availed themselves of the library privileges.

The new books are: 75 volumes of fiction, 15 volumes of Stoddard's Lectures, 22 volumes New International Encyclopaedia, 21 volumes juvenile, 14 volumes miscellaneous.

Amount of fines collected, \$3.32.

An entertainment under the auspices of the Library Association was given for the benefit of the library, and the proceeds will be devoted to library purposes.

MADELINE CATES, *Librarian.*

## History of Vassalboro Lodge #54

The Society has in its library a history of the Vassalboro Lodge written and compiled by Wor. Clyde E. Adams.

For those who aren't involved with the Masons but may know of the Masonic Hall overlooking the mill in North Vassalboro you may not know that it was chartered on May 31, 1827. It was petitioned for on October 11, 1821, but it was not approved until 1827. The chartered members included 26 members, and the first officers elected were Holman Johnson (farmer); Elijah Robinson (trader and legislator); Albert S. Brown (lawyer); Phillip Leach (lawyer); Josiah Fairfield (carriage maker); Eben Ayers (paper manufacturer and merchant), and J.R. Abbott (lawyer, registrar of deeds).

Other members included physicians; manufacturers; sea captains; politicians; carpenters; and innkeepers. They met in Daniel Marshall's Hall in Getchell's Corner.

After prospering for a year and a half, an "anti-Masonic tornado" which was called the *Morgan excitement* reached Maine and "*its violence raging with unabating fury*" it was thought best to close the lodge. It was revived in 1847.

Stop by the museum to read more about it.

From our Vol. 2, No. 1 Annual Report July, 1964 Report from Linwood C. Miller, President

*Our dreams and hopes came true at the beginning of the year. We obtained for our Museum the Old Office Building formerly part of the American Woolen Company property from the Town and later, by lease, from the Ladd Paper Company of North Vassalboro. This Company has been especially liberal, making special concessions for the benefit of our Society.*

*We had our opening July 29, 1963. I would like to thank the people of Vassalboro, and all members of the Historical Society for the many items of local interest that were added after the opening, inducing visitors to return again to learn more of our Town.*

He noted that they held meetings at various places in town and that many donations were received. He also noted that the museum is wired for lights and water is connected with the main.

From the small building in North Vassalboro to the amazing museum and buildings we have now shows the support of our members and the community. Thank you!!

If you are interested in having a specific program or learning about something in the museum, please let us know. Remember that this is **YOUR** Historical Society and we would love to have your input. Reach out whatever way is easiest, a visit, a phone call, a text, or email.

Are you a business owner whose roots are in the Town of Vassalboro? Please accept this invitation to become a member of the Vassalboro Historical Society and have YOUR business highlighted in our quarterly newsletters!

A \$100 membership goes a long way to support the Society and its mission. We have business signs decorating our walls from older businesses. If you haven't stopped by, please do. We would love to hear about your business and to have your support.

## Fieldstone Gardens, Inc.



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Open 7 days 9:00 - 5:00

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

In addition to our regular open hours of 9am-1pm on Mondays and Tuesdays and our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday hours of 1-4pm We will be hosting the following events:

**Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3pm – A Program on Phonographs** will be presented by David Theriault showcasing his cylinder machines and our phonograph. The Society has a large collection of albums for David to use to demonstrate how the phonograph was used for home entertainment and the technical aspects of it such as needle usage and sound adjustment.

**Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at noon – Lunch & Learn**  
You bring your lunch and we'll supply beverages as we hear from local authors or dig deep into one of our (or your) wonderful artifacts.

**Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 5pm - Potluck and Annual Meeting on at the East Vassalboro Methodist Church.**

More info will be sent to members prior to the meeting. We encourage you to attend. If anyone knows of anyone interested in serving on the board, we do have openings and would love to welcome new ideas and new talents.

**Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 3 pm - Show and Tell**  
Bring a treasure or a mystery to talk about with the group.

## Interested in volunteering?

We have so many opportunities available. Digitizing with the Bookeye Scanner, helping with cleaning, organizing, taking down displays and putting them into the correct boxes and locations, finding items for the new displays, writing for the newsletter, completing research requests, helping visitors, identifying non-accessioned items and bringing them to the attention of the curator, and more!

We also have fun! Volunteers who have been helping for years continually find “new” artifacts or read “new” information.

Please consider joining as a member and supporting the Society financially. Send your payment and membership level to:  
Vassalboro Historical Society  
ATTN: Membership Secretary  
PO Box 13  
North Vassalboro, ME 04962

\$15 ACTIVE (Under 65)  
\$10 ACTIVE (65 and Older)  
\$25 Family  
\$200 Lifetime  
\$100 Business

Our work crews have been busy!!

*To the right, Steve and Sharon Hopkins Farrington moving items so the floor could be redone.*



*To the left, four generations with three painters and one imposter. Dondi Dexter, Bella Carrero, Bree Carrero, and Jan Clowes*



*Ben Gidney, Ken Bowring, Doug Phillips, Bruce Lancaster, and John Melrose after moving wagons and farm equipment from one building to another.*