

# Under the Hump

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

### NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting:  
Feb. 15, 7 pm,  
CBMS library

- The business portion of the Feb. meeting will involve election of all officers for the ensuing year and elections for the board of trustees.

Can you identify this  
longtime Duxbury Town  
Clerk & Treasurer?



Our next society meeting will be held at Crossett Brook Middle School on Tuesday, February 15th, 7 pm, in the library. The business meeting will involve the election of all of the officers for the ensuing year. It will also hold elections for all seats on the board of trustees, as this was caused by the absence of meetings during the virus. Our society welcomes new faces and the possibility of new ideas surrounding our town's past. If you are interested in joining our town historical society's government and cannot attend the meeting, please call Donnie at 244-7558, and let it be known.

Our program at the meeting we will be a PowerPoint presentation by Skip Flanders on the addition to the old Duxbury Corner School back in the 1970's by the whole community which was spearheaded by local townspeople from all over town. This is being made possible by a book (presented to D.H.S. by Susan Brooks) as this community effort unfolded. It is a detailed account of many talented townspeople that made this idea become a reality. Please bring a friend and DON'T miss this one. Refreshments will be served.

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The quilt raffle was held at the November 2021 meeting. Ramona Godfrey won the quilt and cash prizes were won by Kathy Grace, Jill Smith, and Laura Titus. Congratulations to all the winners!

### Fundraiser Updates

Profits from our annual November bake sale were \$185.

Profits from the quilt raffle were \$520.

Profits from the annual wreath sale were \$830.

We want to thank everyone who contributed to these fundraisers in any way. From baking goodies, selling tickets, delivering wreaths, and everything in between, your efforts are acknowledged and appreciated. Your support makes fundraising successful!

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

## Archival/Preservation Committee Report

Members: Eulie Costello, Lori Morse, Bonnie Morse, Mark Morse

The committee has not met since our last report. We have had the Society's laptop repaired and software updated so we will be able to bring everything back on-line at our next meeting which has yet to be scheduled.

## Donated Artifacts/Documents/Ephemera

- ◆ Anne (Mehuron) Dumas of Waitsfield – Article reporting on the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and celebration of Charles & Mary Kellogg. Article dated January 11, 1894.

## Monetary Donations

Robert & Rhoda Wimble \* James Hanley \* Jim & Wendy Welch \* Gordon & Theresa Wood  
Dale Christie \* Stephanie Koonz \* Don & Cecile Phillips \* Ramona Godfrey  
Jill Smith \* John & Cindy Senning \* Ed & Marge Gormel \* Shane & Kathy Fisk  
Carlos Nelson \* Bill Morse \* John & Sara Burczy \* Steve & Breta Grace  
Alan & Bev Young \* Bob & Kathy Grace \* Sue Ocker \* John Grace  
Marshall-Carney Family (In memory of Katherine & Howard Sherman)

## Q U I Z

Here is a short quiz found in the archives...answers on page 7.

How Well Do You Know Duxbury?

1. Duxbury was chartered in what year?
2. In 1786, the first two men settled in Duxbury. Name one of these men.
3. In the 1790 census, Duxbury had how many inhabitants?
4. Lucy Bryant holds the honor of a "Duxbury first." What is it?
5. In what year did Duxbury hold its first town meeting?
6. Who was the first man elected to represent Duxbury in the Vermont legislature?
7. In 1850, how many school districts were in town?
8. What year was known as "Eighteen-hundred-and-froze-to-death" due to the hard freeze that occurred in every month of the year?
9. Where was the only post office ever located in Duxbury?
10. What is the elevation of Camel's Hump?

FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES

### LeCLAIR PROPERTY DESTROYED

North Duxbury Mill and Foreman's Home Burned Last Friday Morning

The chair stock and broom handle mill in North Duxbury, owned and operated by Fred LeClair, was destroyed by fire the latter part of Friday forenoon, also the home of George Goslant who was the foreman at the mill. He occupied a building very close to the mill which formerly was the office when the mill property was under the ownership of W. R. Elliott.

The fire caught in the hopper in the top of the mill where waste chair stock was deposited by means of a carrier. The noise of the machinery prevented the men from discovering the fire at once, it being directly over them. The Waterbury Fire Company was called and gave prompt assistance. The railroad station was saved although it was feared it would go.

The loss was heavy, most of the machinery was destroyed, a large quantity of chair stock and a great many bundles of broom handles ready for shipment. Water was being pumped from the brook nearby across the railroad tracks. An approaching freight train made it necessary to disconnect the hose which in the meantime froze. Because of this delay \$1000 worth of matched, planed lumber which might otherwise have been saved, was lost. The broom handle machine, a small planer, a 75 horse power motor, some small hand saws and some bolts were saved. All of Mr. Goslant's household goods were also saved. Mr. and Mrs. Goslant are staying at the LeClair boarding house.

The cause of the fire is not known and the loss will reach many thousands of dollars. Ten men were thrown out of employment, four of them with families. It is reported that Mr. LeClair does not plan to rebuild.

February 7, 1934

### Fred LeClair Dies; Former Duxbury Sawmill Operator

Fred LeClair of Hardwick, former operator of the sawmill in North Duxbury, died early Wednesday afternoon at the Copley Hospital in Morrisville. He would have been 66 years old on April 9. His death came exactly four months to the day after the death of his wife, the former Georgia Rickard of Calais.

Mr. LeClair bought the business of the Duxbury Lumber Co. in North Duxbury in the Fall of 1926 and operated a sawmill there for some 14 or 15 years. During that time he operated the big boarding house at North Duxbury where some ten or twelve workmen in the mill were boarded. He also ran a small general store. Mr. LeClair retired from business about six years ago and all the equipment, tools and horses were sold at auction. He still held a title to the property. His last visit here was on Oct. 12.

Mr. LeClair is survived by his daughter, Shirley, a brother, Edward, of Winooski, and a sister, Mrs. Walter Flanagan of Woburn, Mass. Funeral services will be held at his late home in Hardwick on Saturday afternoon at two o'clock. Rev. Roderic Hurlburt will officiate.

January 2, 1947



The boarding house in North Duxbury owned by Fred LeClair. It burned in 1962.

## EARLY DUXBURY HISTORY

## EARLY DUXBURY HISTORY

Waterbury Record – Thursday, August 7, 1941

By: Mrs. Homer (Mary) Kennedy

While a considerable number of Revolutionary soldiers settled in this region, it was after the war was over, as the first settlers in Duxbury, Walter Avery and Stephen Tilden, came here in 1786. They soon were followed by Benjamin Davis, John Morse, Samuel Ridley Sr., Isaiah Huntley, Daniel Kenyon and several others. All but the first two names in the list are long gone from town. Two families in Duxbury those of Mrs. Howard Kennedy and Ray Davis, can trace their descent directly back to Benjamin Davis, who first represented Duxbury in the state legislature, in the year of 1794. It is practically certain that most if not all, the Morses in town are descendants of John Morse, who was elected Lister and Selectman at the first town meeting held here.

In 1770 several meetings of the 65 proprietors were held in New Milford, Mass. and Newark, N.J. After organizing they voted to have the township surveyed, which was done that summer; then each one drew his lot or "right". A meeting in Bennington, May 1784, was the first in Vermont, all others recorded were held in Duxbury. There were some difference between proprietors meeting and town meetings as some towns had held both for several years. The first town meeting in Duxbury was held at Walter Avery's on March 26, 1792. We have learned that the "old Avery place" at South Duxbury is not where Walter Avery settled. As he deeded 116 acres of land in the northeast corner of town to Jesse Arms in May of 1794 and it is quite likely that he settled near this corner of town. Walter Sterling of South Duxbury is a descendant of Walter Avery. In 1795 the town was re-surveyed, several lots being sold for taxes to pay expenses and the most striking item of which is the amount spent for rum. The last proprietors meeting was held in 1798.

In 1791 there were 39 people in Duxbury. The first child was born in town that year. No mill of any sort was built in town for some years after 1791; corn had to be taken either to Montpelier or Burlington to be ground. The first sawmill was built where B.R. Demeritt's saw mill now stands, not far from 1820. Around 1885 there were at least eight saw mills doing business in Duxbury. All of these are gone, as well as the greater part of the timber and the present day mills are of a very different (different) type.

School districts numbers 1 and 2 were formal at town meeting in March 1796. In 1888 there were eight school districts to accommodate 202 pupils. The average salary for teachers then was \$4.78 per week, including board.

Religious services were held at private homes in the earlier years. A Congregational Church was organized at South Duxbury in 1830. The meeting house was built in 1855 by several denominations to be used by all. Another building at North Duxbury was constructed for a combined church and school house, these two institutions being recognized as the foundation stones for a flourishing community.

Camels Hump, the most distinctive mountain in Vermont, and some think in the whole Northeast, is on the line dividing Duxbury from Huntington. In the days of turnpikes and stage coaches Samuel Ridley Jr., kept a hotel at North Duxbury then called Ridley's Station. He built a carriage road to within three miles of the summit of Camels Hump; also a bridle path so guests could ascend the mountain on horseback. After reaching the top they could still be his guests at a house he built near where the Green Mountain Club's steel huts are now. He was evidently the first in Duxbury to see a chance for business in mountain climbing. His mountain hotel burned many years ago, the one near the river is now Fred LeClair's store and boarding house.

Roads were exceedingly primitive in 1791, foot paths or trails passable only for ox-carts were the best roads to be found in the greater part of Vermont. Some of these were improved, others abandoned and forgotten. The name Scramble Hill, or Hard-scrabble as it was called at first, suggests that the early inhabitants found it difficult to climb the steep slopes which lie between the river valley and the mountain in the background.

Two early roads here have been largely discontinued and the portions still remaining join the Brook road—built considerably later. Much the same is true of several other roads in town.

The Central Vermont Railroad began in 1845 and opened for business in June 1849 and was the first railroad in Vermont. The first train in Vermont ran from White River Junction to Bethel, June 26, 1848. While this road was being built Russell Davis moved his house which stood where the railroad was to be located, a few rods nearer the hill; where today it is one part of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Kennedy's house in which five generations of Mrs. Kennedy's family lived. Mrs. Davis used her red tablecloth to flag the first train over the road for a neighbor who wished to board it.

The first settled minister was Rev. Calvin Huntley, who came to Duxbury soon after 1804. His grandson, Eber W. Huntley was serving his 45<sup>th</sup> year as town clerk at the time of his death. During 149 years since the first town clerk was elected, five different Huntleys served about 83 years.

John Shonio and his wife came to South Duxbury about 1837, being among the earliest settlers there. They reared a family of 15 to maturity. Five sons served in the Union Army; four returned, one of these to walk (on) a wooden leg the rest of his life. This family lived here many years but are now gone from town.

John Kennedy arrived in Duxbury shortly before 1880. After a few years he bought the land which has been owned by his descendants; five generations have lived on it. He was known as "Honest John" or Bear John" to distinguish him from two oth-



## EARLY DUXBURY HISTORY

er men of the same name nearby. Tradition says he killed a bear for each year of his life, 86.

Hiram Lewis was here about the same time as John Kennedy, as they were trapping and hunting partners for many years, even going to New York State to trap sometimes. He settled on Scrabble Hill, later lived with his son Monroe, at the place now occupied by J.O. Young and his daughters which is supposed to be one of the oldest houses in that vicinity. Five generations of this family have lived in Duxbury, several families now at North Duxbury are descendants.

Fineon Hills came from Connecticut before 1813 as his son, Sidney was born here in that year. Sidney Hills was born in the house where Frank Dunn lives; his son was also born in that house. Five generations of the Hills family have attended school at the Red School House, which was formerly known as the Hills school. Ruth Phillips, the present teacher; also an aunt and a great aunt have all taught in that school. The Phillips family have lived in town for five generations; the pioneer Joseph Phillips, coming here from Deerfield, Mass. probably around 1800.

Five generations of the Sherman family have resided in the town. Some of the earlier families lived on Scrabble Hill, in recent years they have been mainly at or near South Duxbury. Ward, Turner and Preston are names long prominent in town. Very few of these families are now left there.

Some bits of knowledge of Duxbury's early days and earliest inhabitants have been presented, along with a few earlier Vermont facts. Careful study of the town records along with information to be gathered from the various families who have lived here a considerable time would, no doubt reveal much more, possibly of greater interest.

This sesquicentennial year, with its various celebrations, is more than worthwhile if it stirs up in some or all of us, a desire to know a little more, and know it a bit better, about Vermont's sturdy homespun past as a solid foundation for the enduring

## FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES

### WOMEN RUN VERMONT TOWN FROM HOMES



Mrs. Mertie Palmer in her office at her home.

The little town of Duxbury, Vermont, has just elected five women to leading offices in the municipality. The women conduct the affairs of the town from offices in their homes. Mrs. Mertie Palmer, elected town clerk, handles the routine matters of her office from a desk in her living room. The town has a population of 631.

*Tuesday, March 18, 1924*

Mrs. Mertie H. Palmer has been elected town clerk of Duxbury, Vt., exactly 105 years after her great grandfather was elected to the same office, which has been held continuously by members of Mrs. Palmer's family for 78 years.

## FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES

This article was sent to us by Anne (Mehuron) Dumas of Waitsfield, who had found it when cleaning out the home of her grandparents, Thomas & Julia Mehuron. At that time (1988) the residence was occupied by Ruth (Mehuron) McGill. Anne had kept it all this time and felt the Duxbury Historical Society might like to have it.

Duxbury, Jan. 11, 1894

Mr. Editor:

The center of attraction for this day and this part of the world seems to be at the hillside home of Charles W. & Mary Kellogg.

The reason for the attraction to this rural spot at this time is that 50 years ago today Charles W. Kellogg induced the school teacher, Mary Wheeler, to abandon the occupation of teacher and accompany him to Parson Pomeroy's thence to his home on South Duxbury hillside, where they are found today, surrounded by 110 sympathizing relatives, friends and neighbors. Fifty years of married life together is rare, but 40 years upon one farm is much more so.

Dinner was served to about 50 guests at 2 o'clock P.M. After dinner, the house was called to order by J. S. Wheeler of Waterbury Center, who introduced A. A. Kneeland to address the audience and for them to present the venerable pair with a few tokens of appreciation, consisting mainly of a pair of easy rocking chairs, a fur overcoat for Mr. Kellogg, a work bowl, work table and adjustable clothes dryer for Mrs. Kellogg, not to induce her to do more work but to assist her to do what she had to do more easily, also a cash contribution of over \$25 was placed in her hands with the express injunction to be warmed and clothed with raiment equal to, if not excelling, the fur coat of her husband.

D. S. Stoddard was then introduced who responded to the presentation and in behalf of the worthy pair thanked the audience for their presence here in body, as well as their presents of financial value. He read communications from several friends; one from Harvey Smith of Worcester, Mass., and one from Luther Bixby of Chicago, each accompanied by a \$5 gold coin, also one from Gilbert Corey of Minnesota, bringing two gold dollars, making a total cash contribution of nearly \$40. Mr. Stoddard then read a poem written for the occasion by himself, after which the visitors began to retire to their homes, but as the evening shades came on the younger friends and neighbors began to gather until the second edition was larger than the first. Sandwiches, cake and coffee were passed to about 80. Mr. Stoddard was called upon to re-read his poem, and also a beautiful and appropriate newspaper clipping by Rev. Frank N. Dexter. Rev. S. C. Vail of Moretown made appropriate closing remarks and prayer and the golden wedding anniversary was over.

(This paper is in receipt of Mr. Stoddard's poem which is entirely worthy of publication, as his efforts always are, but we are unable to get it in type this week.)

P O T P O U R R I

March Weather

Nothing seems to change quite as fast and quite as much.  
As springtime weather holding winter in its clutch.  
The sun so warm and beaming clear and strong.  
To the casual observer—nothing weather wise could go wrong.  
No need for coat or hat or boots when one goes out.  
But when unexpected rain-snow and wind does start it sure has double clout.  
Why, it just seems minutes ago the sky was blue.  
Where did all that storm come from? I wish I knew.  
But rain will wash the road frost which was so deep.  
The biting breeze will dry the mud up the hills so steep.  
And when it seems the season is once again quite on time  
Two feet of snow will put things in a bind.  
Think of these changes of weather as a dish of hash.  
When all records seem to fall or are broken—yes even smashed.  
Sure, it's unpredictable and sometimes a nuisance—quite a bit.  
It gives one a justifiable excuse to one time more by the fireside to sit.  
A dreaming up things to do when March is finally through.  
Such challenging has brought—you'll find patience and fortitude to you.

By Robert W. Wimble  
March 13, 1995

Answers to the quiz on page 2:

(1) 1763. (2) Walter Avery & Stephen Tilden. (3) 39. (4) First baby born in Duxbury. (5) 1792. (6) Benjamin Davis. (7) Nine.  
(8) 1816. (9) North Duxbury. (10) 4,083 feet.

**D U X B U R Y   H I S T O R I C A L   S O C I E T Y ,   I N C .  
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**DON'T FORGET THE NEXT MEETING - FEB. 15  
CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - 7 PM**

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S O C I E T Y ,   I N C .  
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